University of Alberta

Native Dispositions: A Case Study into the Liberation of the Native Subject

by

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Abstract

In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Tomson Highway presents an interesting instance of subjugation. The character of Jeremiah Okimasis, a victim of residential schooling, is presented as the self-hating, self-colonizing, always-already subjugated subject. In true Althusserian fashion, Jeremiah looks to his own subjugation to find his identity and disavows a Native heritage he has been taught to regard as backward, heathen and of the past. Unable to see any other way of being for himself outside of the Native subject, Jeremiah is seemingly doomed to a life of self-loathing, forever vainly trying to attain the example of whiteness set before him.

In Louis Althusser's essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" subjects "freely" accept their fate within the State for the ideology of the state is the only reality they have ever known. So too, it seems does Jeremiah accept his fate as second-class citizen as to do otherwise would be to plunge into a void of nihilism and non-identity. However, Taiaiake Alfred, in his text *Peace Power Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* professes Native traditionalism to be a way of being outside and before state imposed ideologies. The focus of this thesis will be the "becoming" of a Native being -- a former subject realizing his potential through traditionalism.

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Chapter I

In Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, two young Cree boys contemplate the phrase *mea culpa* as it relates to their lives at a Catholic residential school:

> The Okimasis brothers had never discussed the phrase but both had concluded that they were being asked to apologize for something beyond their control. Under these circumstances however -- yards enclosed by steel fences, sleeping quarters patrolled nightly by priests and brothers -- they had also independently concluded that it was best to accept the blame -- it *was* their most grievous fault. (81)

The fault for which they are being asked to apologize hinges on an implicit -- and strongly reinforced -- sense of personal guilt and shame. The creation and perpetuation of such guilt and its continued reinforcement has been the cornerstone of white settler's culture relationship with this country's indigenous peoples. If Native North Americans are to emerge from the identities (and destinies) conferred upon them by a conquering white society they must first act against the state institutions which instill guilt, shame, and self-hatred as readily as they educate and train. This self-affirming action would not be a violent or even overt uprising but rather a healing ceremony involving community, tradition, and some clandestine operations.

The Okimasis' dilemma captures the malicious and often insidiously violent tactics the state uses to ensure the (re)production of its subjects and, through that, the perpetuation of itself. In his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" Louis Althusser demonstrates how this psychic violence is used to solidify the state's "conditions of production" (127):

> The role of the Repressive State Apparatus, insofar as it is a repressive apparatus, consists essentially in securing by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of the relations of production which are in the last resort *relations of exploitation*.... [A]bove all, the State's apparatus secures by repression (from the most brutal force, via mere administrative commands and interdictions, to open and tacit censorship) the political conditions for the actions of the Ideological State Apparatuses. (149)

The militant, prison camp overtones in Highway's description of residential school -- "yards enclosed by steel fences, sleeping quarters patrolled nightly" -- are intentional for it is through the Repressive State Apparatuses as Althusser defines them, "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc" (143) that the state is able to establish its two most important ideological State Apparatuses -- the Church and the School. Victims from a conquered culture, the children who attend these residential schools (which are a clever amalgamation of the state's most valuable Ideological State Apparatuses) find themselves in the same predicament as the Okimasis brothers -- "being asked to apologize for something beyond their control." They are, in other words, caught between their former cultural status and a new regime in which they are always already guilty of being outsiders.

In her text *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Judith Butler discusses this guilt that must be inscribed into every subject as s/he is churned through the Ideological State Apparatuses. "Subjection," writes Butler, "signifies the process of becoming subordinated by a power as well as the process of becoming a subject" (2). Having control over education, the state ensures each of its subjects is originarily subjugated. In the case of the Native subject, the Canadian State reinforces the notion that Native culture, tradition, and heritage must be forsaken in

favour of imposed white society. According to Butler, the subject must forsake that which marks its originary non-alignment in order to take its place within society:

> The call [for conformity] is also figured as a demand to align oneself with the law, a turning around (to face the law, to find a face for the law?) and an entrance into the language of self-ascription -- "Here I am" -- through the appropriation of guilt.... [T]here is no "I" who might ascribe a place to itself, who might be announced in speech, without first a self-attribution of guilt, a submission to the law through an acceptance of its demand for conformity. (107)

That for which the Okimasis brothers, and indeed all indigenous peoples are being asked to apologize is their initial non-whiteness, their originary non-alignment. Unable to attain the example of whiteness put before them and prevented from returning to the heritage of which they have always already been deprived, the Native subject attaches itself to its own subjection in order to find identity:

> Vulnerable to terms one never made, one persists always, to some degree, through categories, names, terms and classifications that mark a primary and inaugurative alienation in sociality. If such terms institute a primary subordination or, indeed, a primary violence, then the subject emerges against itself in order, paradoxically, to be for itself. (28)

The Canadian government reserves the right to determine how Native communities will be educated and administrated. Indeed, the Canadian government even holds the right to determine who is and who *is not* a member of any Native band! According to Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, Mohawk theorist and activist, such political and social tyranny has robbed many indigenous people of a "very basic sense-of-self" (Alfred, *Peace Power Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, 8) In limbo between a seemingly defeated heritage and a white world unattainable to them, many Native Canadians, according to Alfred, have accepted their roles as second-class citizens:

> ...the unfortunate reality is that most [Native North Americans] have put up with all too much shit, lip and ignorant attitudes every day of their lives. This is so true that to some it seems normal. (73)

In his text *Peace Power Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, Alfred claims that the self-hatred, self-effacement, and self-destruction he sees on reserves across North America stem from the often unopposed imposition of European power relations and political systems on indigenous people. If the Native subject is to define her/himself as something other than a subordinate, s/he must first confront these institutions:

> The Western view of power and human relationships is so thoroughly entrenched that it appears valid, objective and natural: it has become what Jens Bartleson called 'the unthought condition of political knowledge. The challenge, then, is to de-think the concept of sovereignty and replace it with a notion of power that is based on more appropriate premises. (63)

In his essay, Althusser notes that "the Ideological State Apparatuses may be not only the *stake*, but also the *site* of class struggle" (147). This is certainly true of education, for "the school...teaches 'know-how'...in forms which ensure *subjugation to the ruling ideology*" (155). With no identity or destiny of their own, many Native subjects become cogs in the Canadian machine, relying on these learned tasks for identity. Alfred decries he absorption of many "co-opted leaders" (74) by this machine -- leaders of communities who have become puppets of the Canadian colonial enterprise. Despite this ruthlessly efficient absorption/creation of subjects, Althusser believes that "the resistance of the exploited classes is able to find a means to express itself [within the Ideological State Apparatuses]...by conquering combat positions in them in struggle" (147). While Althusser is unclear as to how these "exploited classes" are to claim these combat positions, Alfred proposes a form of intellectual warfare.

Taiaiake Alfred's text is an important study in ideology and in particular subject formation and agency. *Peace Power Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* is unique in its proposal for subject self-determination in that it does not promote an overt (and violent) negation of imposed identity nor does it suggest an open negotiation of this subjugation. Alfred's manifesto calls for a form of action that could not only empower Native North Americans, but similarly subjected individuals everywhere. Alfred's route to subject liberation is somewhat clandestine and covert.

"Our world has changed," Alfred admits, "and the skills we need are no longer the ones that allowed our ancestors to live free and happy in the bush. Instead we need the skills to operate in the information age" (133). It seems the lot of Native North Americans to venture across the slippery slope between absorption and agency. In order to equip themselves for this journey through such treacherous territory, the Native people who have already suffered the trials of residential schools and corrupt policies must recapture the pride and tradition that once enabled them. Once this has been accomplished, today's indigenous communities can ensure their children will not suffer the fate of the Okimasis brothers -- and become manipulated, self-hating tools of the state. Alfred does not call for a complete rejection of white society, just a strengthening of Native pride and self-assurance which will ensure that indigenous people can enter into this new and technical environment without fear of co-optation.

Alfred's new age warriors which comprise "a new indigenous intelligentsia" (135) are truly guerrilla soldiers in that they do not openly contradict the state's interpellation of them as subjects working within the state system. This

misrecogniton on the part of the state is a fundamental part of this former subject's quest for agency. Strong and proud, these "indigenous intelligentsia" can enter the inner workings of the Canadian state and "undermine the intellectual and moral foundations of colonialism and expose the inner workings of...societies that promise justice and practice oppression" (144). Alfred's proposal could very possibly present a form of action that can solve the problem of subject agency. An in-depth study of *Peace Power Righteousness* using the already established canon of ideology and subject formation is necessary to determine if Alfred's text does indeed truly liberate the always already subjugated subject.

This thesis constitutes a meeting of Western and Native thought in an effort to offer a solution to the problem which plagues both ideologies: the liberation of the subject whose very existence is (seemingly) hinged upon its subjection. This work could be divided into three parts, the first of which seeks to draw parallels between the modern Native subject and the always already subject of Western thought. The works of Michel Foucault, Althusser, as well as Butler's stimulating reworking of them will be used to construct (for criticism) the apparently inescapable prison of guilt and shame that has been built around indigenous people and communities. The external and internal forces at work upon the bodies and souls of Native men, women, and children will also be examined to determine how the Canadian state produces self-berating, "self-colonizing" (Butler, 133) Native subjects. The second section deconstructs the Western notion of the subject using both Native and non-Native theories. Giorgio Agamben's challenging of the "example", that "purely linguistic being....[t]hat is not defined by any property, except by being-called....not being-Jakob, but being-called-Jakob" (Agamben, *The*

Coming Community, 10) goes hand-in-hand with the criticism of Alfred and others of the term "Indian." The term exists only linguistically -- not being-Indian, but being-called-Indian. "Indian" is a simulation created by a conquering society, and as Gerald Vizenor writes in *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*, "the simulations of the other are instances of the absence of the real" (1). Though this deconstruction of the term "Indian" has to be disconcerting to the state which relies on naming and categorization for control, this loss of identity is not exactly a comfort to the subject. If Butler is correct, and the subject does attach itself to its own subjection in order to find identity, then this subject is taking a great risk in looking for an identity outside the one conferred upon it. Section three will investigate just what constitutes the existence of this Native *non*-subject once s/he has emerged from his/her subjection. It is surprising to note that several Native theorists share the same ideas when discussing the new identity of the Native surviving and thriving in postcolonial North America. Alfred calls these new Native beings the "indigenous intelligentsia". Lawrence M. Hauptman, in his text *Tribes and Tribulations* refers to these new age Natives as "Warriors with attaché cases" (109). Gerald Vizenor refers to these "postindian warriors of survivance" as "ironists" (*Manifest Manners*, 86). Each theorist remains true to the idea of a type of intellectual guerrilla warfare in which each Native person garners a position within mainstream society, yet does not permit this position, given to them from the state and through which the state identifies them, come to wholly define them. The overall purpose of this thesis is to determine how Native subjects introduce "invention into existence" (Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 229) and risk

everything to become self-determining beings yet remain leading members of society.

Tomson Highway's semi-autobiographical *Kiss of the Fur Queen* presents, through Highway's literary alter-ego Jeremiah Okimasis, the instance of a Native successfully and completely indoctrinated and inculcated by the Ideological State Apparatus. Specifically, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* documents the creation of a self-loathing, self-colonizing subject who has been completely brainwashed by the educational and religious figures he confronts in residential school. It is this specific Native subject, the act of his subjugation, and the means to his potential liberation that this thesis proposes to investigate. Subjects such as Jeremiah (and according to Highway and Alfred, they *do* exist) have been so absorbed by the ideologies professed by residential schools that they, like Butler's subjects are left with one of two choices: disavow their Native heritage and find a place of subjugation within society, or hold onto a way of life they have been told is of the past and risk falling into a void of non-existence.

It would be naïve and somewhat patronizing to assume every Native North American is presented with this paradigm of existence. It would also be foolish to assume every Native forced to attend residential school emerged from it a self-scorning and conforming subject. Highway himself opposes this notion in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* through Gabriel Okimasis, a character based on the author's brother Rene Highway. Gabriel claims defiantly in the face of his indoctrinated brother that "North American Indian religion…makes a whole lot more sense than your Catholic mumbo-jumbo" (183-4) -- evidently not every victim of residential school permitted their lives to be shaped by the lessons forced upon them by religious agents intent

on their cultural annihilation through repeated reinforcement of white superiority and Native inferiority.

Though Highway presents a very particular case of subjugation through his depiction of Jeremiah in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, it is a very intriguing one. The construction of Jeremiah Okimasis is remarkably similar to the construction of subjects discussed by Althusser in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" and the prisoner investigated by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*. The seemingly inescapable boundaries of subjugation erected by the state in these instances, combined with the long lasting psychological violence which creates a subject so absorbed he continues to colonize *himself* a la Butler's subjects, presents perhaps the most difficult case for liberation. A true test of the theories of Alfred, Vizenor, and Hauptman lies in the investigation of the liberation of this subject that seems hopelessly reliant upon its subjugation for identity. The Native subject discussed in this thesis, the Native subject which this thesis hopes to liberate is the subject who, like Jeremiah Okimasis, is so deeply altered by the ideologies of the oppressor he regards his own heritage with self-loathing and looks to his own subjugation as his only means to existence.

In order to ensure the successful and continued (re)production of subjugated subjects, the state must present itself as the only purveyor of useful and correct knowledge -- and it must prove itself to be such during the developmental years of each of its subjects. Education, as Althusser writes in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," is the single most important Ideological State Apparatus:

> ...the Ideological State Apparatus which has been installed in the *dominant* position in mature capitalist social formations, as a result of violent political and ideological

class struggle against the old dominant Ideological State Apparatus. is the *educational ideological apparatus*. (152)

In the instance of the Native North American. "this violent political class struggle against the old dominant Ideological State Apparatuses" began with contact between Europeans and Natives. In true Althusserian fashion. the Repressive State Apparatus (in this case. the military) proved the Europeans to be vastly superior militarily and this violence. or threat of it. truly "secur[ed]...the political conditions of the reproduction of the relations of production" (149). "Contact was a curse." writes David Francis in *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*. "a silence of death"(57). This silence was fostered by the many religious and political officials who. supported by the powerful Repressive State Apparatuses self-righteously entered Native communities disrupting and sometimes radically altering ways of life that have been practiced for centuries. It is a fact Lee Maracle laments in her short story "Bertha" from the collection *Sojourner's Truth and other Stories*:

> The priest had christened the most important man in the village. Slowly christians appeared in their ranks. The priest left no stone unturned. Stories. empowering ceremonies. became pagan rituals full of horrific shame. Even the way in which the grooms were chosen changed. The old women lost their council seats at the fires of their men. Bighouses were left to die and tiny homes isolated from the great families were constructed. Little houses that separated each sister from the other. harbouring loneliness and isolation. Laughter dies within the little walls of these homes. No one connected the stripping of woman-power and its transfer to the priest with the sudden uselessness all the people felt. Disempowered. the old ladies ceased to tell stories and lived out their lives without taking the children to the hills again. (109)

Even with the ever constant threat of violent reprisal. such absolute modification of a way of life could not have been possible through the actions of solitary priests scattered throughout communities. Such radical changes were made possible through a well-established institution that is perversely admirable in its ruthless

efficiency: the residential school. In *Peace Power Righteousness*, residential schools are considered to be the primary tool used by the settler culture to irreparably alter the lives of Native North Americans:

> Think about how contact and everything that came with it affected the transference of knowledge. We don't have the skills that we would have learned if everything had stayed the same. People's experience in residential schools is a good example. On one level the family gets broken up; on the next level the community gets broken up. (Alfred, 8)

What gives these residential schools such deeply penetrating power is not only their combining of two important Ideological State Apparatuses -- the Church and the School -- but their usage of the most repressive of the Repressive State Apparatuses: the prison.

"At the heart of all disciplinary systems functions a small penal system." (Foucault, 193) writes Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* and these words could not be more true than when applied to the residential school. As Highway depicts in the semi-autobiographical *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, the residential school was an institution which physically kept the children under its influence while keeping freedom and any of the old influences *outside*:

> A cold wind came sweeping over the vast field of gravel that was the boys' playground, a six-foot, steel-mesh fence holding at bay the surrounding pine and spruce, birch and poplar and willow. (62)

In Althusser's capitalist system, "the children in whom the proletarian reproduces himself." ("Ideology," 193) the children whose very existence within the state generates the "reproduction of the conditions of production" (131) are the "obligatory audience" (156) of the educational ideological apparatus for "eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven" (156). In the case of the Native subject, the conquering culture wished to create, *within the span of a few generations*, a legion

of co-opted, always subjugated subjects from a culture otherwise unfamiliar with their laws, religion, and customs. Such an endeavor would necessitate complete and continuous control on the part of the state over its new subjects.

The reservation school is very much like the regular (Althusserian) school in that

> [I]t takes children...at infant-school age, and then for years, the years in which the child is most 'vulnerable,' squeezed between the Family State apparatus and the educational State apparatus, it drums into them, whether it uses old or new methods, a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology (French [or English], arithmetic, natural history, the sciences, literature) or simply the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civil restriction, philosophy). (155)

Yet, as Foucault writes, "[t]he prison is like...a strict school" (*Discipline and Punish*, 215) and the residential school certainly parallels Foucault's description of a prison:

> One thing is clear: the prison was not at first a deprivation of liberty to which a technical function of correction was later added, it was from the outset a form of "legal detention" entrusted with an additional corrective task, or an enterprise for reforming individuals that the deprivation of liberty allowed to function in the legal system. In short, penal imprisonment, from the beginning of the nineteenth century covered both the deprivation of liberty and the technical transformation of individuals.... (216)

It must be noted that this early nineteenth century notion of reforming the guilty followed Europeans into late nineteenth century North America. As is obvious from this quote by Merrill Gates, nineteenth century *reformer* and member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, the "Indian schools" of America in the 1880s were still supportive of institutions which deprived subjects of their liberty in order to produce reformed and productive citizens:

> Christian missionaries plunge into these reservations, struggle with the mass of evil there, and feeling that bright children can be best educated in the atmosphere of civilization, they send to Eastern institutions these Indian children plucked like the fire-stained brands from the reservations. They are brought to our industrial training

schools. The lesson taught by the comparison of their photographs when they come and when they go is wonderful. (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 165)

This whole-hearted belief in reformation on the part of government officials, religious leaders, and educators had a two-fold and intertwined purpose in legitimizing and securing white settler culture as the dominant culture in North America. First, this notion (guise) of reforming the Native, of bringing civilization and Christianity to an uncivilized and heathen race, assuaged any guilt the State may have felt in the punishing of the Native. Second and more importantly, such intense and incessant internment of the Native would make him/her "an individual to know" (Foucault, 219) -- a nameable subject with a place in the workings of the state.

The residential school legitimized itself in much the same manner as did the prison, the latter of which Foucault writes in *Discipline and Punish*:

> The prison, that darkest region in the apparatus of justice, is the place where the power to punish...silently organizes a field of objectivity in which punishment will be able to function openly as treatment and the sentence inscribed among the discourses of knowledge. (224)

The "field of objectivity" organized by the proponents of residential schools establishes life among the Natives as the "mass of evil" of which Gates writes while life in (and after) residential school is regarded as a time when indigenous people are converted from problems to assets: "the lesson taught by comparison of their photographs when they come and when they go is wonderful." Certainly the evil of tearing a child from home and family is overshadowed by the greater good of colonizing and civilizing the child as a subject of the state. Just as in Foucault's prisons, it is a pleasant (and planned) coincidence that in reservation schools the subject which the state so graciously conceded to reform is also the subject that poses the greatest threat to society as the state establishes it:

it [is] possible to join two lines and to constitute under the authority of medicine, psychology, or criminology, an individual in whom the offender of the law and the subject of scientific technique are superimposed -- or almost -- one upon the other. (224)

Thus through its noble proposal to civilize the Native does the state legitimize its more sinister purpose -- vigilant surveillance over this unfamiliar race.

As discussed by Gerald Vizenor in *Manifest Manners* the greatest threat posed by Native North Americans to early white settlers was their *unknowability*:

Indeed, the greatest danger the Indians could pose for Lewis and Clark arose from their absence rather than their presence....What was later to be a cliché in Western adventure literature, the white man's seeing Indians and taking care to remain unseen by them, was reversed as they strained to see the Indians who they knew were seeing them in order to enter into dealings with them. (2)

This fear of the unknown was prevalent throughout white North America, and, subconsciously or not, this fear was the catalyst behind residential schooling and assimilation. Having decimated Native North American culture through killing and disease the state still expressed concern over the remaining few. Rather than waste time learning and respecting the ways of this "dying culture" (Francis, 36) the state began absorbing Native youth in their residential schools, where the goal was not to know the student as a *Native*, but to make him/her *knowable* as a reformed subject -- the Indian with the heart of a white man. This is a process Francis discusses in *Imaginary Indian*:

Canadians did not expect Indians to adapt to the modern world. Their only hope was to assimilate, to become White, to cease to be Indians....

Canadians did not engage in the outright extermination of their Native population. However, they wholeheartedly endorsed the assimilation of the Indian, which in the long run meant the same thing, an end to an identifiable Indian people. In this view of the world, the only good Indians were traditional Indians, who existed only in the past, and assimilated Indians, who were not Indians at all. (59, 60)

Once again the white conquerors of North America have distanced themselves from any guilt while allaying their fears. Residential school not only destroyed the frightening Indian living in the bush but also, quite strangely, allowed the State to believe it was preserving a race it almost eradicated:

> Having first of all destroyed many aspects of Native culture, White society now turned and admired its own recreations of what it had destroyed. To the extent that they suffered any guilt over what had happened to the Native people, Whites relieved it by preserving evidence of the supposedly dying culture. Whites convinced themselves that they were in this way saving the Indians. By a curious leap of logic, non-Natives became the saviors of the vanishing Indian. (36)

A constant warden-like surveillance would enable the white settler culture to recreate these Native North Americans into subjects that would not inspire fear but would rather become a knowable part of society. The answer to what these "recreations" are and how they are recreated lies for the most part in Foucault's discussion of the prison and its prisoners in *Discipline and Punish* and in the history of the residential school.

The first superintendent of one of North America's earliest "Indian Schools" in Carlisle, Pennsylvania was "Captain Richard Pratt, who experimented with the education of tribal political prisoners in Fort Marion, Florida" (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 54). Pratt, speaking at the Lake Mohonk Conference, basically captured in one statement the perception and purpose of white settler culture in relation to Native Americans: "It is only the Indian in them that ought to be killed" (54). Having substantially reduced the number of Native Americans so that they no longer posed a great *physical* threat, white society was afforded the leisure of *observing* the Natives as objects of scientific and social interest. Much like the

prisoner of nineteenth century Europe, the Native in late nineteenth and early twentieth century North America became a "case":

> A case which at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power. The case…is the individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality; and it is the individual who has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized… (Foucault, 203)

As Francis writes, to white society there are only two types of Indians – the traditional Indian or the assimilated (non-)Indian. In the confines of the residential school, white society had the opportunity to study the first while creating the second. Having plucked the child from his "traditional" lifestyle, white authorities may, as Foucault implies, describe, judge, measure, and compare these Native children in light of the white example, thus achieving a sufficient knowledge of a different and "dying" culture. More importantly, especially in the sense of establishing the state, these safely secured children can now be properly "trained or corrected, classified [and] normalized" to become more like the white example. Highway writes of one of the insidiously ingenious tactics deployed by residential schools to ensure the "normalization" of Cree children in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*:

> "The winds of late October…." said Champion-Jeremiah to himself, then stopped. His Cree must not be heard or he would fail to win the prize: the boy who acquired the greatest number of tokens from other boys by catching them speaking Cree was awarded a toy at month's end. Last month, the prize had been an Indian war bonnet; this month it was a pair of cowboy guns. (Highway, 63)

Having assimilated the children to operate as agents – or, to adopt a common prison analogy, rats – against each other, the residential school establishes the most important aspect of a prison determined to reform its inmates – complete and total surveillance.

Following Pratt's thesis that only the "Indian" in Native North Americans needs to be killed, the state sets out to "substitute for force or other violent constraints the gentle efficiency of total surveillance" (Foucault, 217) – a "permanent gaze" (217) as Foucault calls it, that controls and contains all prisoners/students. "The chief function of the disciplinary power is to train." (188) writes Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*, and

> [t]he exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation: an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible. (189)

Holding these children captive for the ten most influential years of their lives and maintaining always a very watchful eye upon them, the state ensures the eradication of all traces of the "Indian" in its subjects and makes certain they will always *see* and *know* the subject as one of its own:

> In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility ensures the hold of power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of constantly being seen that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection. (199)

It is this "fact of constantly being seen," the subject's always-availability for manipulation on the part of the state, that guarantees the subject will remain a subject after s/he has left the school/prison. This psychic violence enacted upon the Native during this period of surveillance ensures that the Native, though not always physically *seen* by the state, will always remain *known* as an always already subjugated subject. During their stay/imprisonment at the schools of the white establishment, the Native subjects are indoctrinated with a powerful notion. This notion is perpetually reinforced until it grows to consume the subjects – to become their prison even after their "liberation" from the schools. This notion, hitherto

unknown to the Native North Americans, is guilt – the primary weapon used by the state to perpetuate itself and subjugate its subjects.

This guilt is tied into the ages old defeat of Native North Americans at the hands of European settlers – the militaristic imposition of white culture over Native culture. In her essay "The Disempowerment of First North American Native Peoples and Empowerment Through Their Writing," Jeanette C. Armstrong systematically describes the many facets and implications of this defeat:

> Indigenous peoples in North America were rendered powerless and subjugated to totalitarian domination by foreign peoples, after they were welcomed as guests and their numbers were allowed to grow to the point of domination through aggression. Once total subjective control was achieved over my peoples through various coercive measures and the direct removal of political, social, and religious freedoms accomplished, the colonization process began.
> In North America this has been to systematically enforce manifest destiny or the so-called "White Man's Burden" to civilize. In the 498 years of contact in the Americas, the thrust of this bloody sword has been to hack at the spirit of all beautiful cultures encountered, leaving in its wake a death toll unrivalled in recorded history. This is what happened and continues to happen.
> There is no other word other that totalitarianism which adequately describes the methods used to achieve the conditions of my people today. Our people were not given choices. Our children, for generations, were seized from our communities and homes and placed in indoctrination camps until our language, our religion, our customs, our values, and our structures almost disappeared. This was the residential school experience. (239)

As Alfred writes, today's Native is the subject of a subjugation that took place five hundred years ago, in "the far away and long ago" (37). Even when residential schools were just beginning their "normalization" of Native children, the defeat was four hundred years old and deeply entrenched in the Native psyche. What the residential schools did was emphasize this defeat to ensure that this ages old conflict became somehow predicative to the Native identity. Residential schools attempted to foster the notion among Natives and non-Natives that "[t]he Indians are doomed: their fate will be that of the many primitive races now gone" (Francis, 23). Simply

being born Native in this new European dominated world made certain the always already guilt of the Native person. The Native became the Foulcauldian delinquent with predilections for behavior no longer acceptable in civilized society: "The delinquent is...not only the author of his acts...but he is linked to his offense by a whole bundle of complex threads (instincts, drives, tendencies, character)" (Foucault, 220). In an interesting choice of words (at least as far as this thesis is concerned!) Foucault explains that the "native disposition" (221) of the delinquent may be remedied through imprisonment similar to the life of a residential school student:

> The regime suitable to them is not so much that of punishment as of education, and if possible mutual education: isolation at night, work in common in the day, conversations permitted provided they are conducted aloud, reading in common, followed by questioning, for which rewards may be given. (221)

This is almost an exact replica of the residential school described by Highway in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* in which Jeremiah, along with "[t]wenty-nine other Cree boys and girls his age...in rows around him" (Highway, 58) learn new concepts of sin and hell. The nightly patrol of priest through the sleeping quarters ensured "isolation at night" and toys were awarded to the children using English (*not Cree*) to participate in class. The residential school is truly a place where liberty is deprived in an attempt to transform the criminal. And the Native *is* this criminal (i.e. guilty subject), a fact that is reinforced throughout his/her sentence of (in most cases) ten years as a prisoner/student of this school:

> By levying on the time of the prisoner, the prison seems to express in concrete terms the idea that the offense has injured, beyond the victim, society as a whole. There is an economy-moral self-evidence of a penalty that metes out punishment in days, months, and years.... Hence the expression, so frequently heard, so consistent with the functioning of punishments, though contrary to the strict theory of penal law, that one is in prison in order to "pay one's debt." (Foucault, 216)

If there ever was any doubt on the part of the Native of his guilt, it has been emphatically wiped away as he is forcibly taken from his community and placed in an institution of punishment, constriction and reform. Thus has the state created the always already guilty subject. This subject's guilt will not leave him when he leaves the institution for the teaching he has learned at school have become a part of the subject – in truth, they have become the subject. In an evaluation of Hegel, Butler explains how this is possible:

> The master, who at first appears to be "external" to the slave, reemerges as the slave's own conscience. The unhappiness of the consciousness that emerges is its own self-beratment.... [P]ower that at first appears external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject's self-identity. (Butler, 3)

Having been successfully de/reprogrammed, the Native subject now becomes a prisoner to a "noncoporeal" entity Foucault refers to as *the soul*: "a certain technology of power over the body" (Foucault, 176) which occupies and surrounds the prisoner even after her/his release:

> ...let there be no misunderstanding: it is not that a real man, the object of knowledge, philosophical reflection, or technical intervention, has been substituted for the soul, the illusion of the theologians. The man described for us...is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A "soul" inhabits him and brings him into existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy: the soul is the prison of the body. (177)

The state has produced the Indian with the soul of a white man and now unleashed these subjects back into general population: "[s]omewhere around the age of sixteen, a huge mass of children are ejected into production" (Althusser, 155) – but unlike the Althusserian subject who finds a place for itself as a cog in the state's

machine, the Native subject returns home and effectively finishes the state's eradication of Native culture:

> Children returned to communities and families as adults, without the necessary skills for parenting, for Native life style, or self-sufficiency on their land base, deteriorated into despair. With the loss of cohesive cultural relevance with their own peoples and a distorted view of the non-Native culture from the clergy who ran the residential schools, an almost total disorientation and loss of identity occurred. The disintegration of family and community and nation was inevitable.... (Armstrong, 240)

There can be no return home for the subject for she has been filled with (and consumed by) the ideology of the state. The subject has internalized "the master" through schooling which has occurred over the ten most influential years of her life. These adults will have their own children who will be assimilated even easier than their parents. In this fashion the state creates a nation of subjects already guilty of their non-whiteness, but also always reformed through their (almost prenatal) acceptance of the state's laws. The guilt of the student prisoner transfers to the entire culture as every Native must overcome their heritage in a white world established before they were born. For the modern Native "the law is broken prior to any possibility of having access to the law" (Butler, 108)) – in a most brutal instance of foreclosure, the Native subject is always guilty of being Native, of representing characteristics no longer acceptable in society. In order to exist in this society, the indoctrinated Native must latch on to this guilt and come into social being as a delinquent, a subjugated subject who will perpetually "pay his debt" to the state for his originary non-alignment.

The ideology of the state pervades all indigenous nations:

> Framing indigenous peoples in the past as 'noble but doomed' relics of an earlier age, allows the colonial state to maintain its own legitimacy by preventing the fact of indigenous peoples' nationhood to intrude on its own mythology. (Alfred, 59)

After generations of methodogical manipulation, the law of white North America has become known to many Natives as it is described in *Peace Power Righteousness*: "the only game in town" (9). The Native subject, who has been indoctrinated into this ideology through residential school and other forms of tampering, is thus placed in a very precarious position – as a Native s/he represents this doomed culture, this non-entity of misfits which have been exorcised from society. Yet s/he *is* a subject of the state and must seek some sort of existence through the state. In other words, s/he has to find a way to play the game. Submission, a complete disavowal of oneself as Native and an enhancing of oneself as a subject seems to be the only route to agency for this indoctrinated subject:

> "Submission" to the rules of the dominant ideology might then be the understood as a submission to the necessity to prove innocence in the face of accusation, a submission to demand for proof, an execution of that proof, and acquisition of the status of subject in and through compliance with the terms of the interrogating law. To become a "subject" is thus to have been presumed guilty, then tried and declared innocent. Because this declaration is not a single act but a status incessantly reproduced, to become a "subject" is to be continuously in the process of acquitting of the accusation of guilt. (Butler, 118)

Of course, the Native subject can never truly be absolved of "the accusation" of being Native. Nor can s/he ever become a full and equal participant in the "only game in town." In this struggle to attain whiteness the Native subject experiences his/her "constitutive melancholia" (23):

> An incomplete and irresolvable grief. Unnamed and incomplete, melancholia is the limit to the subject's sense of *pouvoir*, its sense of what it can accomplish and, in that sense, its power. Melancholia rifts the subject, making a limit to what it can accommodate. (23)

Melancholia is the grief expressed by the subject over the loss of power that predicates it, in other words a power that it never had. This "loss" could be the

Native subject's always already destroyed rights as a Native person or the never-to-be-had equality the Native person might have had had s/he been born a white person – either way this "loss" has come before the subject and constitutes it as such. Forced to always submit to the laws yet limited to how far s/he will go within the state structure the Native subject comes into "existence" as an already guilty yet always repenting subject.

Cursed with this predicative loss of equality and innocence, Native subjects must learn to exist as second-class citizens within the state:

> Vulnerable to terms that one never made, one persists always, to some degree, through categories, names, terms, and classifications that mark a primary and inaugurative alienation in sociality. If such terms institute a primary subordination or, indeed, a primary violence, then a subject emerges against itself in order, paradoxically, to be for itself. (28)

What does it mean to emerge against oneself in order to be for oneself? According to Butler the subject's existence consists of continually "acquitting oneself of the accusation of guilt" – the subject (or Native) is perpetually repenting/disavowing/working against that which enables the state to subject him/her – the subject's originary non-alignment. As the Native struggles for equality s/he is constantly hindered by this guilt – by his/her Native heritage. Unable to become completely innocent of this heritage, the Native subject regards her/himself "as its own object of scorn" (46). An internalized racism has been fostered by the state within the soul of each Native subject. Such a Native is torn in two, divided by two very contradictory identities. One part, which promises existence within white society, is the absorbed subject – the subject who disavows its originary guilt and obeys the laws and restrictions of the state. The other, ever weakening part is the (non)identity of the Native person – a throwback to the past whose beliefs and skills

could not withstand the encroachment of white society and have no place in it now. Colonization has entered the very soul of the Native subject as the absorbed, active part of the subject continues to distance itself from its heritage of defeat and otherness. Highway depicts such a case of internalized racism in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, in which Jeremiah Okimasis, victim of residential school and absorbed urban Indian happens upon a Powwow being conducted in a Winnipeg church:

> ...confined by the walls of this church gone to seed, blasted by florescence, the outline of the giant crucifix high above the place where the altar should have been, [the Powwow] looked downright perverse. Who did these people think they were, attempting to revive dead customs in the middle of the city, on the cusp of the twenty-first century?
>
> That his embarrassment had descended to a simmering dislike dismayed him. But why shouldn't he hate this place, these cheap goings on, this conquered race of people?
>
> "Devil worship," said Anne-Adele Ghostrider. "That's what [the priests] called this. The nerve!"
> Yes, Jeremiah though, the nerve. And right on the money. He mumbled some excuse and left. (Highway, 172, 174, 176)

Jeremiah's aversion to his own heritage is common among residential school victims forced to swallow the ideology of a conquering society. Alfred quotes psychologist Eduardo Duran in *Peace Power Righteousness* when explaining the guilt and self-hatred prevalent among indigenous people:

> Once a group of people have been assaulted in a cynical fashion, there are psychological ramifications. With the victim's complete loss of power comes despair, and the psyche reacts by internalizing what appears to be genuine power – the power of the oppressor. The internalizing process begins when Native American people internalize the oppressor.... At this point, the self-worth of the individual and/or group has sunk to a level of despair tantamount to self-hatred. (Alfred, 34)

The "dead customs" of this defeated culture offer no power to the Native subject seeking a place within the state. As Alfred writes, "[t]he state relegates indigenous peoples rights to the past" (59) and the formerly empowering Powwows, potlatches

and stories seem to have no place within a modern world of European values. The Native subject therefore accepts a sort of "identity through injury" (Butler, 105) in that s/he acknowledges the defeat of his/her culture and embraces the laws of the conquering culture. This is the primary violence Butler mentions in *Psychic Life of Power* – the rising against oneself (one's culture) in order to be for oneself (exist in modern society). It is better to accept this defeat and accept the culture of the conquering society than to perpetuate this defeated culture and garner no place for oneself in society (i.e. the society which has replaced the one it has defeated):

> Called by an injurious name, I come into social being, and because I have a certain inevitable attachment to my existence, because a certain narcissism takes hold of any term that confers existence, I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially. The "self-colonizing" trajectory of certain forms of identity/politics are symptomatic of this paradoxical embrace of this injurious term. (104)

Born into the world of the oppressor, always already shorn of any self-agency through heritage, the Native subject can only exist through the guilty identity imposed upon her/him by the ideologies thrust upon him/her in institutions such as the residential school:

> social existence, existence as a subject can be purchased only through the guilty embrace of the law, where guilt guarantees the intervention of the law and, hence, the continuation of the subjects existence. (112)

Thus the same rationale Francis claims frees the conquering European society from any guilt it may have felt during its forced modification of Native North Americans becomes the means to agency for the Native subject – the indigenous peoples' "only hope was to assimilate, to become white, to cease to be Indians" (Francis, 59). Unable to "return" to a heritage they never truly possessed, indoctrinated with the laws and beliefs of white society, the Native subjects only alternative is self-

colonization, to further their subjection through embracing the role the State confers upon them.

"There is guilt," Butler writes, "and then a repetitive practice by which skills are acquired, and then and only then an assumption of a grammatical place within the social as a subject" (Butler, 109). The residential school instills guilt as it teaches. In Althusser's words, the school "teaches 'know-how,' but in forms which ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology*" (Althusser, 133). This education is pivotal to the subject's continued identification of itself through its subjection. As Butler writes, these skills become the defining actions of the subject:

> To master a set of skills is not simply to accept a set of skills, but to reproduce them in and as one's own activity. This is not simply to act according to a set of rules, but to embody rules in the course of action and to reproduce these rules in embodied rituals of action. (Butler, 119)

The skill *becomes* the subject. Unable to achieve any sense of identity the subject readily accepts the role designated to it:

> Each mass [of skilled subjects] ejected *en route* is partially provided with the ideology which suits the role it has to fulfill in class society: the role of the exploited (with a 'highly developed,' 'professional,' 'ethical,' 'civic,' 'national,' and 'apolitical' consciousness), the role of the agent of exploitation (ability to give the workers orders and speak to them: 'human relations'), of the agent of repression (ability to give orders and enforce obedience without discussion or ability to manipulate the demagogy of a political leader's rhetoric), or the professional ideologist (ability to treat consciousnesses with respect, i.e. with the contempt, blackmail and demagogy they deserve). (Althusser, 155-6)

The subject is presented with a bizarre type of freedom, on which Althusser elaborates near the end of his essay. The subject, Althusser contends,

> is stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission. This last note gives us the meaning of this ambiguity, which is merely a reflection of the effect which produces it: the individual *is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the [State], i.e., in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection*, i.e. in order that he shall make the questions and

actions of his subjection 'all by himself.' *There are no subjects except and for their subjection.* That is why they 'work all by themselves.' (182)

The Native students which comprise the Althusserian "masses" ejected into society discover very quickly that "'liberation' from external authorities does not suffice to initiate a subject into freedom" (Butler. 33). The "freedom" the Native subject experiences in this instance is very limited by internalized barriers that determine the subject's identity: "[t]he limits to liberation are to be understood not merely as self-imposed. but. more fundamentally. as the precondition of the subject's very foundation" (33). Already subjected by the state. each Native maintains his/her identity as a subject through his/her selection of his/her level of co-optation.

"Co-optation" as Alfred defines it seems to primarily focus on Native leaders. "but." Alfred writes:

it is easy to co-opt everyone else also. The problem people face is gaining access to the levels of power. and that requires cooperating with the people who control things. You have to have an enormous amount of power to oppose co-optation. (Alfred. 67)

Of course. most Natives churned through the Ideological State Apparatuses of colonial North America do *not* possess an "enormous amount of power" and are easy prey for the state. Not desiring to exist outside the state. the subject fosters a new order of desire:

If one accepts Spinoza's notion that desire is always desire to persist as one's own being. and recasts the metaphysical substance that forms the ideal for desire as a more pliable notion of social being. one might be prepared to redescribe the desire to persist as one's own being as something that can be brokered only within the risky terms of social life. (Butler. 28)

Though conscious of its own subjection. the subject must accept it in order to exist socially. It is impossible to resist and oppose the power that constitutes (and oppresses) it without risking the subject's own existence. The state has set up a

system which subjects the subject prior to its existence and makes refusal of this subjugation impossible. Victim to a long established order of oppression, the Native subject can only internalize this oppression – in a sense oppressing itself in order to exist – and accept its fate as a subject forever disavowing its guilt. The Ideological State Apparatuses place an example of whiteness before a captive Native audience and establish this example as the only ethical way of being. The Native, irreparably guilty of being other-than-white, now compounds this guilt with his/her inability to truly obey the call and bring her/himself into alignment. The Native becomes a self-berating, self-loathing creature – a split entity who can not shake off its Native heritage yet must always disregard this "dead culture" in order to exist in the society of the victorious oppressor. Dependent on the state for identity, the Native must become defender of his/her own subjection, embracing (and being embraced by) the state which is both the source of its subjection and its only form of functioning identity. Yet the failure of the Native subject to attain the example of white society placed before her/him is also the failing of the state. Ideological State Apparatuses are in and of themselves tremendous failures in that they are unable to produce an *exemplary subject* – a subject that attains the example completely. The Ideological State Apparatus – in truth the very state, deceives itself into believing it is (re)producing exemplary subjects through its teachings and modifications. The state relies on categories, names, and examples to perpetuate itself and it is because of the state's dependence these labels – which represent what Alfred refers to as "the fundamental imperial lie" (Alfred, 60) that the subject may find true agency *outside* its subjugation.

Chapter II

Even prior to first contact between Europeans and Native North Americans, the western world had already created their image of "the indian":

> Europeans had always known that cannibals and other monstrous races inhabited the fringes of the known and ipso facto civilized world.... European publishers, illustrators, writers of first hand accounts, and compilers of compendiums made cannibalistic images virtually emblematic of America. (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 161)

Following contact, the image of the bloodthirsty savage was further perpetuated through the art, photographs, and writings of the settler culture:

> It was the fate of the Indian to play the villain in this western romance.... Wild and unruly they supposedly prompted the creation of the Mounted Police in the first place (without disorder, there would be no need to impose order).... [I]n the vast literature of the Mountie produced between 1885 and World War II, the Indian is the 'bad guy', savage and ungovernable, a symbol of the dark forces of anarchy which had to be subdues before civilization could flourish in the West. (Francis, 61-2)

These "bad guys" *were* the exception to white civilization, the "bad subjects" of Althusser's study:

> ...the subjects 'work,' they 'work by themselves' in the vast majority of cases, with the exception of the 'bad subjects' who on occasion provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (Repressive) State Apparatus. (Althusser, 180)

In Canada, the Repressive State Apparatus came in the form of the Mounted Police who arrived in Canada and began "bashing heads for God" (Francis, 74)) as Francis so eloquently puts it – bringing the Natives in line with European laws and beliefs.

This subduing of Natives is celebrated in literature and through the "performing Indian" seen at the turn of the century in such displays as Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. The "bad guys" have been entrenched to the point of a bizarre glorification in the popular culture of North America. These "bad guys" are the

"injuns," the unrepentive "scalpers" and "wagon burners" killed by the hundreds at the hands of law and order types like John Wayne and Davey Crockett. These "performing Indians" as Daniel Francis terms them serve a dual purpose in society and its continued perpetuation: "Frozen as they were in an historical stereotype, Performing Indians invoked a bygone era. By implication, they celebrated the triumph of White civilization" (102). In truth, the performance of these Indians is remarkably similar to the march of the well-disciplined soldiers in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* – both represent through their performance the victory of the master:

> Let us take this medal as evidence of the moment when, paradoxically but significantly, the most brilliant figure of sovereign power is joined to the emergence of the rituals proper to disciplinary power. The scarcely sustainable visibility of the monarch is turned into the unavoidable visibility of the subjects. And it is this inversion of visibility in the functioning of the disciplines that was to assume the exercise of power even in its lowest manifestations. (Foucault, 290)

The monarch, or state is made visible (or rather, its *power* is made visible) through the performance of its subjects. The very presence of "Indians" in wild west shows or photographs represents their submission to the ideology of the settler culture. White North Americans have taken great care and have expended great amounts of energy to ensure the totality of this submission by portraying Natives traditions as backward, inadaptable, and frozen. Edward Curtis, for example, "visited hundreds of native communities and processed more than forty thousand pictures" (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 161) all of which captured for eternity the last remnants of a dying culture – though some required a little doctoring on Curtis' part:

> Curtis concentrated on representing 'traditional ways,' even to the extent of using wigs to cover shorn hair, providing costumes, and removing signs of the mechanistic twentieth century. (161)

These photographs, movies and sideshows not only represent submission, but the complete and total *death* of the "Indian." These people depicted could not survive in the modern world, they could not advance. The "Indian" had to face either a literal death or a figurative one – a ceasing to be "Indian." Daniel Francis explains this psychic death in *The Imaginary Indian*:

> [A] modern Indian is a contradiction in terms: Whites could not imagine such a thing. Any Indian was by definition a traditional Indian, a relic of the past. The only image of the Indian that was presented to non-Natives was therefore a historical one. The image could not be modernized. Indians were defined in relation to the past and in contradistinction to White society. To the degree that they changed, they were perceived to become less Indian.... White society was allowed to change, to evolve without losing its defining cultural, ethnic and racial characteristics, but Indian society was not. Indians were considered strangers to progress. They were fixed in a traditional mode and could not change without becoming something else, something not Indian. The...Indian, therefore, could never become modern. (Francis, 59)

"The only good Indian is a dead Indian" or, to be more specific and return to Captain Richard Pratt's philosophy: "It is only the Indian in them that ought to be killed." The image of the "grateful Indian" (69) was popular around the turn of the century according to Francis. A sort of Tonto figure, the grateful Indian willingly became the white man's sidekick in the further delivering of civilization to the Indians. Yet this figure was not enough for white North America. As the following quote from Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs demonstrates, total eradication through absorption was the desired goal: "Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question" (211).

This absorption, of course, took place largely within the walls of residential schools where residents were instructed to strive after the example – an impossible

task but preferable to being identified as a "museum object" (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 155) of a defeated culture. Separation from the once empowering ceremonies, the powwows – "those tricky shamanic ceremonies of the past" (70) became so total that many of the products of these residential schools no longer felt anything in common with the ways of their ancestors. As Highway depicts in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* sometimes this separation was so wide that some Natives become repulsed by the old ways:

> When Jeremiah opened his locker door, a page of lime-green paper fluttered down, landing at his feet. A photocopied picture stared out at him – two luxuriant sprays of feathers radiated sun-like from the man's back, one above the other, a rooster's crown of something brush-like sprouted from his head, his wrists were bound in bracelets, his legs and feet in buckskin leggings and moccasins, all replete with floral-patterned bead work. Bent at the waist, the man could have been searching for some small object in the grass, except that one hand held aloft, as if to recognize some luminous presence towering above him, a large bird's wing, a hawk's, perhaps and eagle's.
> Jeremiah recoiled. There was something so ...pagan about the image, primitive – the word made his eyes sting – Satanic. (Highway, 162)

This repulsion is doubly compounded by the inescapable fact that these Native subjects can never fully disavow their heritage, can never become non-Native. A desire for a more present-day and active identity – any identity other than that of the defeated savage – drives many Native subjects to grasp onto any subservient form of agency the state dangles before them. Having near completely killed the "Indian" in Native North Americans (killed the Indian in that the state has relegated all indigenous religions, traditions, and political systems to the past) the state now creates a series of "Indian Acts" which provide Native North Americans with limited rights and identities. "[I]n Canada," Alfred writes, "it is the state that determines who is considered indigenous under the law" (71). Every Native "must

also meet state-defined criteria for Aboriginal identity in order to gain access to [certain] legal rights" (58). Once again, through years of oppression and normalization, the state has ensured that its laws are "the only game in town" and Native communities establish band councils based on European structures; permit the interference of European government, religious, and educational institutions; and work diligently within an imposed capitalist economy just so they may place themselves in the best position to receive what little rewards the state offers.

Alfred suggests that so many of his people have become so dependent on state conferred identities and the minimal power that accompanies such titles that they have started to fight amongst themselves, divided from each other by lines the state has drawn:

> The imposition of labels and definitions of identity on indigenous people has been a central feature of the colonization process from the start.... Factions and conflicts based on divisions between 'status versus non-status,' 'enrolled versus non-enrolled,' or 'on-reserve versus urban' arise because our communities are still subject to outside controls. The practice of dividing Native people according to their status in the colonial law opposes the basic tenets of all indigenous philosophies. The extent to which these divisions continue characterize Native communities indicates how deeply people have internalized the colonial mindset. (84)

The state's control of the Native subject's identity and living space following his graduation parole from residential school is eerily similar to society's control of the freed inmates in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*: "they are under the surveillance of the police, they are assigned to a particular residence, or forbidden others; they leave prison with a passport that they must show everywhere they go..." (228). Indian status provides the possessor (or the one possessed by it) with an identity, a place, and a limited agency. More importantly it divides the Natives into separate groups – groups known by the state and groups which vie with each other for the

scraps which fall from the state's table. Limited as it is, this status represents what Butler would call a "linguistic guarantee of existence" (Butler, 111) and the subject, desiring existence, develops a "passionate attachment" to the terms of his/her existence and the power (i.e. the state) which dispenses these terms:

> ...the desire to survive, "to be," is a perversely exploitable desire. The one who holds out the promise of continued existence plays to the desire to survive. "I would rather exist in subordination that not exist" is one formulation of this predicament (where the risk of "death" is also possible). (7)

The Native grows passionately attached to these "state defined criteria for Aboriginal identity" for only through them can the "Indian," whose very existence harkens back to a dead culture, hope to gain any agency within the modern day state. Yet, even Butler admits that the name which the state has conferred upon the subject and through which the subject supposedly comes into social being, this categorization offers nothing more than "the grammatical place within the social as a subject" (119). A *grammatical* place – a *being* through language. It is through problematizing the *reality* of this "linguistic being" (Agamben, 9) that one begins to deconstruct not just the myth of the "Indian" but the *myth of the state*.

In *The Imaginary Indian*, Francis claims "Native people had most to fear from writers who claimed to know them best" (77) – for such writers, Francis goes on to explain, were only interested in portraying the Indian as "an impediment to national progress and civilized values" (81). The name "Indian" became synonymous with savagery, backwardness, and – most importantly – the past. A passage from Vizenor's *Manifest Manners* supports Francis' statement:

> [L]anguage did the capturing, binding Indian society to a future of certain extinction.... Treating living Indians as sources for a literary construction of a vanished way of life rather than as members of a vital continuing culture, such writers used words to replace rather than to represent Indian reality. (8)

The Native North Americans were effectively written out of history and existence – white writers "memorialized rather that perpetuated" (8) a Native actuality of presence. For those Native subjects who desired to be actual and present, they had to assume a position through the language, the names, of the state:

> The subordination of the subject takes place through language, as the effect of the authoritative voice that hails the individual. In the infamous example that Althusser offers, a policeman hails a passerby on the street, and the passerby turns and recognizes himself as the one who is hailed. In the exchange by which that recognition is proffered and accepted, interpellation – the discursive production of the social subject – takes place. (Butler, 5)

Representing an always already defeated and delinquent culture and therefore always already guilty of an initial non-alignment, the Native subject is subordinated through language in that s/he answers the call for the guilty subject to align itself with the law. Thus does s/he find his/her grammatical place.

The possibilities of being captured by, and existing through language are notions seriously shaken by Giorgio Agamben in *The Coming Community*. In an Agambenian sense, Butler's notion of the subject's social existence or being is not really being at all but "linguistic being" (Agamben, 9), which is really just existing (if this word can be used here) in name only, and as Agamben writes, "the name insofar as it names the thing, is nothing but the thing insofar as it is named by the name" (79). Surprisingly, it is this somewhat convoluted phrase that points toward an escape for the subject.

The name for Agamben is more than just a singular title, but is an example meant to classify a group and bring all members of this group into being and *knowability* through commonality, or, as Agamben writes: "it transforms singularities into members of class, whose meaning is defined by a common

property" (9) (Indian, proletariat, Canadian). It is the (forced) acceptance of this naming, this coming together under a common property, that denies Alfred's Native subject a "very basic sense of self" (Alfred, 8) and permits the state to further absorb the subject as s/he vainly tries to live up to the example set up by the dominant power. It is this acceptance of the name "Indian" conferred upon his people which Alfred blames for the hopelessness and lethargy he sees in Natives all over North America:

> ...in the book I talk about loss of consciousness – 'consciousness' here being our sense of indigenous nationhood. In fact, a lot of our Native people imagine themselves to be Canadians. And that's not true. In the words of the ritual [of Condolence], these Canadianized Indians are 'in the darkness;' they've had their eyes shut to their true being, they can't envision a future in which we are nations. They can't see a positive future, they are wallowing in the pain of being dependent wards of the Canadian state. (xxi)

No matter how tightly one's eyes have been closed, no matter how unable one is to see a "positive future" no Native person could possibly be blind to the *negative present* of Native North Americans – to the poverty and idleness which signify the inability and nonconcern of Western societal structures to provide indigenous peoples with the means for a productive, positive, and pro-active existence. Yet to criticize this structure is to put one's own existence in jeopardy:

> For the "I" to launch its critique, it must first understand that the "I" itself us dependent upon its complicitous desire for the law to make possible its own existence. A critical review of the law will not, therefore undo the force of conscience unless the one who offers that critique is willing, as it were, to be undone by the critique that he or she performs. (Butler, 108)

As Alfred writes, "the Western view of power and human relationships is so thoroughly entrenched that to some it appears valid, objective, and natural" (Alfred, 68). The governmental structures of Native North Americans are based on Western models, the very identity of Native individuals is dependent on criteria

conceived by the state. For the subject to criticize the state. which confers identity upon the subject. the subject must destroy him/herself. The subject. through any criticism. courts death in that any rejection and reaction against the state will plunge the subject into a void of nihilism and non-identification. In a system created before s/he existed. the subject arrives too late to criticize – already subjugated. the subject can exist only through the name the state provides him/her. Alfred begins the deconstruction of this subjugation with a keen criticism of Western values into which many indigenous people are born:

> ...we must acknowledge that. unlike the earth social and political institutions were created by men and women. From the indigenous perspective. this means that people have the power and the responsibility to manipulate these institutions....
> In this view. sovereignty is not a natural phenomenon but a social creation – the result of choices made by men and women located in a particular social and political order. The unquestioned acceptance of sovereignty as the framework for politics today reflects the triumph of a particular set of ideas over others – and is no more natural than any other man-made object. (62)

According to Alfred. the fact that the subjugation of his people and the creation of the "Indian" subject occurred "far away and long ago" is not sufficient reason for this subjugation to continue. Ignoring for the moment the "death" Butler promises will come if the subject criticizes the state which created him/her. one can see in Alfred's criticism an invitation to question the *reality* of these "social and political institutions...created by men and women." Such a criticism calls for a return to Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."

Ideology – the rules. laws. beliefs. and values which structure a state -- are. according to Althusser "conceived as pure illusion" (160). Having said this Althusser poses himself a question: "why do men 'need' this imaginary transposition of their real conditions of existence in order to 'represent to

themselves' their real conditions of existence?" (163). Althusser's initial response echoes in Alfred's critique of Western social and political institutions:

> Priests and despots are responsible. They 'forged' the Beautiful Lie so that, in the belief that they were obeying God, men would in fact obey the Priests and Despots, who are usually in alliance in their imposture, the Priests acting in the interests of the Despots or vice versa, according to the political positions of the 'theoreticians' concerned. There is therefore a cause for the imaginary transposition of the real conditions of existence: that cause is the existence of a small number of cynical men who base their domination and exploitation of the people on a falsified representation of the world which they have imagined in order to enslave other minds by dominating their imaginations. (163)

Though the above supposition is only one of several Althusser puts forward to determine the "cause" of ideology, it does prove true in the instance of colonialism. Expansionism (the desire of the "Despot") did find a ready partner in religion and, following a firm establishment through the violent actions of the Repressive State Apparatus, set out to "enslave other minds by dominating their imaginations." As Alfred contests, however, this "triumph of a particular set of ideas over others" does *not* make these ideas *real*.

According to Gerald Vizenor, Native North Americans are victims of "occidental predation" (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 158) in that Europeans created the "Indian" without getting to know the Native. The "Beautiful Lie" which the white settler culture told itself, and which the church and state reiterated over and over again was that Natives were pagan, prehistoric, and *predestined* to be either killed off or absorbed by a more moral and modern culture. "The Indian is an invention of the European" (Francis, 4), writes Daniel Francis and is a fundamental part of "the myths non-Natives tell themselves about being Canadian" (7). It was essential to the creation of a Canadian state that the Indian become the *other*:

> Whites set themselves the task of inventing a new identity for themselves as Canadians. The image of the other, the Indian, was integral to this process of self-identification. The Other came to stand for everything the Euro-Canadian was not. (8)

The eradication and co-optation of Native North Americans legitimizes the imposition of Western power structures. Westerners believed "Indians" to be savage in every sense of the word – ungodly, unruly, and unable to progress on their own. Therefore the successful imposition of Western ideologies over Native ones represented a great new state created by Euro-North Americans:

> The state relegates indigenous peoples' rights to the past, and constrains the development of their societies by allowing only those activities that support its own necessary illusion: that indigenous peoples today do not present a serious challenge to its legitimacy. Thus the state celebrates paint and feathers and Indian dancing, because they reinforce the image of a doomed nobility that justified the pretence of European sovereignty on Turtle Island. (59)

The Canadian state *still* perpetuates the "romantic tragedy" (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 11) of Native North Americans – conferring upon them a noble past of pride, warriors, and an interesting if not somewhat heathen culture of "paint and feathers and Indian dancing." These ways will not provide the Natives with the means to survive in the modern world – this Indian is of the past. The modern Indian works for the state, within its guidelines to further perpetuate it. These are the only types of Indians – the savages of the past and the assimilated Indians of the present who, according to Francis, are "not Indians at all."

Yet Francis writes that "Indians, as we know them, do not exist. In fact there may be no such thing as an Indian" (Francis, 4). The "we" of this statement does not only refer to white people – the ideas and actions of white society have been taught to Native and non-Native children. Residential schools, government interference, and religious tampering have made today's Native subject much the

same as Hegel's bondsman whose conscience is that of his master. In disseminating the myth of the North American "Indian" it is necessary to investigate the misconceptions on the part of both white culture *and* the Native victims of a prison-like education who were forced to internalize another race's misconceptions of their culture.

White society, in its proclamation that it *knows* Indians as remnants of a dead society now co-opted into the state's rank and file demonstrates a primary (and fatal) misrecognition on the part of the state of its (supposed) subjects. Butler's reworking of Althusser's "hail" demonstrates this flaw:

> Consider the Althusserian notion of interpellation, in which the subject is constituted by being hailed, addressed, named. For the most part, it seems, Althusser believed that this social demand – one might call it a symbolic injunction – actually produced the kind of subjects it named. He gives the example of a policeman in the street yelling "Hey you there!", and concludes that this call importantly constitutes the one it addresses and sites. The scene is clearly a disciplinary one: the policeman's call is an effort to bring someone back in line. Yet we might also understand it in Lacanian terms as the call of symbolic constitution. As Althusser himself insists, this performative effort of naming can only *attempt* to bring its addressee into being: there is always the risk of a certain *misrecognition*. (Butler, 95)

Butler then asks her readers to "[c]onsider the force of this dynamic of interpellation and misrecognition when the name is not a proper name but a social category" (96). The North American "Indian" is a social category created by Europeans who "viewed aboriginal Americans through a screen of their own prejudices and preconceptions" (Francis, 7). Viewing themselves as superior (a view seemingly justified through military dominance), white settlers created a representation of the "Indian" which legitimized the European desire to civilize and colonize.

The North American Indian is a falsehood, a trope, a boogeyman created by the white culture to further perpetuate its "white man's burden" to bring civilization

to those it perceives to constitute the lesser races of the world. The Indian is an Agambenian example which in this instance collected millions of unknowns and made them knowable under the category of North American Indian. Like Vizenor writes, the Indian presented a greater danger through his absence rather than his presence – it is through organizing these unknown individuals into one mass under the category "Indian" that the state makes an attempt at keeping these Indians present at all times. The great truly fear the small (the hidden, the unknown) and has always striven to make certain none of the small ever escapes their watchful eye:

> Napoleon did not discover this world: but we know that he set out to organize it: and he wished to arrange around him a mechanism of power that would enable him to see the smallest event that occurred in the state he governed. (Foucault, 128)

In both Canada and America, the white government set up reservations and reservation schools to keep the "Indian" in sight and discipline him/her so that s/he became even more knowable through absorption. In the instance of resistance the cavalry, the Mounted Police or the much eulogized cowboy rode in to impose order.

> What the State cannot tolerate in any way…is that the singularities form a community without affirming identity, that humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging (even in the form of a simple presupposition). (Agamben, 86)

The "simple presupposition" which holds the state together and legitimizes it is the "Indian" – an example which stands for the savagery and lawlessness which tormented North America before the arrival of the Europeans. The Indian is a presupposition, a misrecognition, and a false interpellation. It exists only in the writings of European colonizers, yet "the assumption that language is a representation of the real world…has been one of the foundations of the social sciences and colonial dominance" (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 69) Despite

knowing at some level (either consciously or subconsciously) that the Indian was *not* what it perpetuated him/her to be, the state went ahead and solidified itself on this myth. The solidification was so complete that even the Native subjects began to see themselves as Indians.

Interpellation fails, but that alone is not enough to liberate the subject. As Butler demonstrates, in the instances where the state has deeply rooted this flawed ideology, the subject, through a desire to exist within the state, *willingly misinterprets itself*:

> ...the law becomes the object of passionate attachment, a strange scene of love. For the conscience which compels the wayward pedestrian to turn around upon hearing the policeman's address...appears to be driven by a love of the law that can be satisfied only through punishment. To the extent that Althusser gestures toward this analysis, he begins to explain how the subject is formed through the passionate pursuit of the reprimanding recognition of the state. That the subject turns around or rushes toward the law suggests that the subject lives in passionate expectation of the law. Such love is not beyond interpellation; rather it forces the passionate circle in which the subject becomes ensnared by its own state. (Butler, 128-9)

The failure of the Ideological State Apparatuses to convert the Native subjects/students into white subjects, its failure to produce exemplary subjects is not initially viewed by the subject as a space of agency, a catalyst for the Native subject to discover some sort of agency outside the state-defined parameters. Rather the subject exemplifies a passionate expectation for the state's reprimand. The Native subject does not believe that agency can come through his/her Native heritage – not in this society where all Native traditions have seemingly been relegated to the past as worn out and useless. This is a notion Highway demonstrates through Jeremiah in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Walking home from church with his brother Gabriel, Jeremiah demonstrates just the mindset which condemns Native traditionalism to

some primitive past. Confronted by his brother's diatribe against Christianity, Jeremiah asks if there is an alternative:

"But what else is there?"
"There's Indian religion. North American Indian religion."
"There's no such thing," Jeremiah sputtered.
"Yes, there is," countered Gabriel. "A religion that's one hell of a lot older –"
"How do you know all this?"
" – and makes a whole lot more sense than your Catholic mumbo-jumbo. And how do I know? Because Amanda Clear Sky told me."
"Amanda Clear Sky knows fuck all. How can anything make more sense than Christianity? You're being sacrilegious, Gabriel, just to get my goat."

"Amanda said that Indian religion listens to the drum, to the heartbeat of Mother Earth."
"That's pagan Gabriel, savages do that kind of thing..." (Highway, 183-4)

Native victims of residential schools who have become as indoctrinated and self-loathing a Jeremiah Okimasis cannot turn to a heritage they regard as "sacrilegious" and "pagan." Rather, Jeremiah and others like him turn to the examples placed before them by a conquering white society and demand that they be inculcated by them. If the Native subject cannot attain the white example then s/he must settle for the role of scolded child. Like a youngster requiring discipline, the Native anticipates and *desires* to be punished in order to assume a small mantle of agency within the state. Such a desire and way of being is described by Gerald Vizenor as "manifest manners."

According to Vizenor, "[m]anifest manners are the simulations of dominance: the notions and misnomers that are read as the authentic and sustained as representations of Native North Americans" (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 2). Vizenor claims that these manifest manners were entrenched along with and through the imposition of Western values and institutions:

> The cruelties of national and colonial authorities were widespread: the grievous advance of avarice, perverse determinism and the destinies that would become the manifest manners in the literature of dominance. (2)

Yet again it is emphasized that the language of the Western world figured greatly in the subjugation of Native North Americans. Native existence, when not blasted away by rifle or withered away by disease has been written away by a conquering society which believes "no place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments" (9). In overthrowing an oral culture, the Europeans greatest weapon was the pen which recorded for posterity that "history" began with the arrival of white settles in North America.

The literature of dominance absorbed words like canoe, which was "picked up from the Indians in the West Indies by Columbus' sailors" (11). Such absorbed terms are called *loan words* by Vizenor and include other words like maize (also from the West Indies). Interestingly, "the word *Indian*, however is a colonial enactment, not a loan word, and the dominance is sustained by the simulation that has superseded the real tribal names" (11). Faced with so many cultures, unable to distinguish between them, the state, in an effort to maintain the order necessary for its perpetuation, created an *example*. The term Indian which serves to identify all Native North Americans be they Chippewa, Anishinabe, or Cree. Embedded into the notion of Indian was the manifest manners of a co-opted subject, the subjugated being whose very existence represents a defeated culture and the continuing perpetuation of the state through that subject's assumption of his/her role in white state politics.

Thus both the colonizing culture and the colonized victim have bought into the idea of the Indian subject – the state created and perpetuated the notion while the

subject ensconced as s/he is in the ideologies of the state, actively seeks out his/her subjugation as the essence of her identity. Despite this dual belief in the term Indian and all it exemplifies, the term is still imaginary. The term Indian is an example, which is

> Characterized by the fact that it holds for all cases of the same type, and, at the same time, it is included among these. It is one singularity among others, which, however, stands for each of them and serves for all. On one hand, every example is treated in effect as a real particular case; but on the other, it remains understood that it cannot serve in its particularity. Neither particular nor universal, the example is a singular object that presents itself as such, that *shows* its singularity. Hence the pregnancy of the term *para-deigma*, that which is shown alongside.... Hence the proper place for the example is always beside itself, in the empty space in which its undefinable and unforgettable life unfolds. (Agamben, 10)

The example transforms singularities into members of sets defined by a common property which can exist only linguistically: "Linguistic being (being-called) is a set (the tree) that is at the same time a singularity (*the* tree, *a* tree, *this* tree)" (9). The example can only exist through linguistic being for it is at once a singularity among others yet "stands for each of them and serves for all" (10). Living a linguistic life, the example exists only in the being called – not being-Indian but being-called-Indian. Indefinable by any property other that being-called, the example cannot maintain the set for which it is meant to stand.

> Being-called – the property that establishes all possible belongings (being-called-Italian, -dog, -communist) – is also what can bring them all back radically into question. It is the Most Common that cuts off any real community. (10)

To simplify, the term "Indian" represents a set or a class while at the same time representing a singularity – *the* Indian, *an* Indian, *this* Indian. The impossibility of being both a group and a particular individual can exist only linguistically. The term Indian is *not* the presence of many or even one actual being – it is rather, the absence of the real. This is a notion exploited by Vizenor in both *Manifest Manners*

and *Fugitive Poses*. Exhibiting his distaste for the term "Indian," Vizenor refuses to capitalize this word of dominance throughout *Fugitive Poses*:

> The *indian* is a simulation, the absence of Natives; the *indian* transposes the real, and the simulation of the real has no referent, memories, or Native stories. (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 15)

The word Indian has no referent, yet it is used excessively by government officials who wish to limit and define Native North Americans. Recalling an anthropological blunder concerning a nonexistent culture that was given credence for some time, Francis writes: "But if the Indian is imaginary, could government policy be any more realistic that the wildest theories about the Mound Builders?" (Francis, 179). The "Indian" is itself a blunder, a misnomer, a myth on which the state has constructed itself. Yet if Vizenor and Agamben are correct, and the term Indian represents nothing but a state perpetuated illusion, than the Native North Americans supposedly signified under the sign "Indian" are now afforded a little room in which to play. An escape from subjection seems possible yet a major question remains to be answered – if the colonized and self-colonizing Native subject shirks off this identity of subjugation, the only identity s/he has ever known, what does s/he become?

Chapter III

In Cree folklore there are many stories of the Weetigo, an evil spirit-monster which possesses a man and transforms him into a relentless cannibal. In one tale, a particular Weetigo devours communities until it is confronted by Weesageechak, a Cree trickster, who solves the problem in typically vulgar trickster fashion. In Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, the Okimasis brothers, Jeremiah and Gabriel, now young men, tell this trickster story to each other as they wander through a Winnipeg shopping center:

"Remember Aunt Black-eyed Susan's story," [Jeremiah] asked..."about the weasel's new fur coat?"
"You mean the one where Weesageechak comes down to earth disguised as a weasel?... And the weasel climbs up the Weetigo's bumhole?"
"Yes..." Jeremiah, in spite of himself, exploded with jagged laughter. "In order to kill the horrible monster."
"And comes back out with his white fur coat covered in shit?"
"You know," said Jeremiah, suddenly philosophical. "You could never get away with a story like that in English."
"Why did Weesageechak kill the Weetigo?" asked Gabriel, as he washed down a gob of bleeding beef with a torrent of Orange Crush.
"All I remember is that the Weetigo had to be killed because he ate people," replied Jeremiah through a triangle of pizza. "Weesageechak chewed the Weetigo's entrails to smithereens from the inside out."
"Yuck!" feigned Gabriel, chomping into a wedge of Black Forest cake thick with cream.
The brothers Okimasis burst into the bronze light of the late afternoon.
"'My coat' moaned the weasel. My nice white coat is covered with shit!'" Gabriel continued the story of Weesageechak....
"Feeling sorry for the hapless trickster," said Jeremiah circumspectly," God dipped him in the river to clean his coat. But he held him by the tail, so its tip stayed dirty."
"And to this day," Gabriel took his brother's words away, "as Auntie would say, 'the weasel's coat is white but for the black tip of the tail.'" Exalting that they could still recall their wicked Aunt Black-eyed Susan's censored Cree legends, the brothers Okimasis danced onto the sidewalk.
Grey and soulless, the mall loomed behind them, the rear end of a beast that, having gorged itself, expels its detritus. (Highway, 118, 120, 121)

Kiss of the Fur Queen is full of allusions to this Weetigo. For Highway, white culture is the most insatiable Weetigo, devouring the souls of young Native people relentlessly. The plane which docks annually in Jeremiah's community to carry the children away to residential school is depicted by Highway to be "swallowing – or better yet, spewing out – Josephine, Chugweesess, Chichilia, and the other Eemanapiteepitat children" (47). In Althusserian fashion, the children are swallowed by the system, churned through the educational and disciplinary organs of the Ideological state Apparatuses and "ejected 'into production'" (Althusser, 155).

Judith Butler continues this scatological take on subjectivity in her text. In *Psychic Life of Power*, Butler discusses the consciousness of the subject or bondman, whose "master…at first appear[ing] to be external to the slave, reemerges as the slave's own consciousness. The unhappiness of the consciousness that emerges is its own self-beratement" (3). This self-beratement grows into a "negative narcissism, an engaged preoccupation with what is most debased and defiled about it" (50) – in the case of the Native North American an internalized racism develops focused on that which "is most debased and defiled' by the state – the Native's heritage. "Here," Butler writes, "consciousness in its full abjection has become like shit, lost in a self-referential anality" (50). Absorbed by the state, molded and shaped by the ideologies of the state's religious, educational, and political systems, the Native subject regards his/her heritage, his/her undeniable being-Indian as waste – an unpurgable reminder of a way of existing unacceptable in current society. Butler goes on to explain how the subject deals with this dilemma:

Significantly, it is here, in the effort to differentiate itself from its excretory functions, indeed, from its excretory identity, that consciousness relies on a "mediator," what Hegel will call "the priest." In order to reconnect with the pure and the unchangeable, this bodily consciousness offers up its very "doing" to a priest or minister.... The priest institutes bodily self-abrogation as the price of holiness, elevating the renunciatory gesture of excretion to a religious practice whereby the entire body is ritualistically purged.... Because the body cannot be divided...it must be ritualistically renounced. (51)

Such is the plight of Jeremiah Okimasis and so many other Native Americans devoured, digested, and dispelled by the great white Weetigo. In Highway's novel, Jeremiah has so fully renounced his Native heritage that the arrival of a Native girl in his otherwise all-white high school threatens his very existence by reminding him that he *is* Native:

Hearing – and feeling – the new arrival sliding into the seat not far behind him, Jeremiah was put on his guard: was it because this young – and undeniably Indian – girl confronted him with his own Indiannness, which his weekly sightings of the drunks on North Main Street had driven him to deny so utterly that he went for weeks believing his own skin to be as white as parchment? He had worked so hard at transforming himself into the perfect little "transplanted European" – anything to survive. He was suddenly enraged, unbalanced. (Highway, 123-4)

Life for subjected Natives becomes an unending struggle in which many end up doing "anything to survive." Everyday s/he "exists" within the white world the Native subject is threatened with his/her own destruction. Caught between an unattainable white example which promises being and an undeniable Native heritage which promises non-existence, the Native subject is doomed to be perpetually called upon to display his/her existence as a "perfect little 'transplanted European'" while disavowing that which can not be utterly disavowed – his/her "own Indianness" as Highway terms it.

This disavowal comes in many forms. Co-opted Natives, according to Taiaiake Alfred, are those who "rationalize and participate actively in their own

subordination and the maintenance of the Other's [i.e. the state's] superiority" (Alfred, 75). Alfred claims

> [n]on-indigenous people have always seen indigenous people in problematic terms: as obstacles to the progress of civilization, wards of the Crown, relics of savagery and dregs of modern society, criminals and terrorists. (3)

The desire for Native people to become something other that the "dregs of modern society," the waste of the colonial enterprise, is a driving force behind co-optation. Many Native subjects join with the state in a "decolonialization process" which, according to Alfred does more to erase the traces of Native society than it does to heal the wounds of colonialization:

> Throughout the process of supposed decolonialization, many Native[s] have steadily moved away from the principles embedded in traditional cultures, towards accommodation of Western cultural values and acceptance of integration into the larger political and economic system. (4)

Rather than force their ideologies on an already subjected people, "the state has found that the most effective way of co-opting the power of community leaders is to embrace them" (74) through the subtle game of (apparent) give and take in which the "dead culture" of Native Canadians is celebrated while the state's politics are further imposed:

> In the area of culture, folklore and the arts are promoted while traditional political values are denied validity in the process of negotiating new relationships, and the state defends its 'right' to create Native communities and determine their membership. (4)

The resulting Native subject is similar to the performing Indians of Wild West shows and Sunday Matinee serials – their performance of Native rituals, their telling and recording of Native folklore, their creation of Native art all of which have been termed "legal" by the state, serve only to further exemplify the dominance of one culture over another.

These ceremonies and creations do not live in the eyes of the state – they are the preserves of a dead culture – the Native people can continue to keep them on life support, so to speak, as long as they remember that the law of the land lies in the hands of the white state:

> The "exceptional Indian" played, and plays, a dual role. He or she is an interpreter and defender of Native culture. At the same time, by succeeding so well as a White Man's Indian, the "exceptional Indian" implicitly confirms the superiority of White society. (Francis, 129)

As an "interpreter and defender" of a dead culture, the Native becomes a museum object – regaled in the feathers, skins, and paints of his culture, the interpreter becomes the living dead – a live-action display of a past existence, the embodiment of nobility and doom. When they shed their clothing, their culture, and their past and acknowledge "the superiority of White society" by continuing to work within imposed European structures, the Natives enter the only form of agency available to them – co-opted cogs in the white machine. Alfred laments this division between Native culture and Native politics:

> Native American community life today is framed by two value systems that are fundamentally opposed. One, still rooted in traditional teachings, structures social and cultural relations; the other, imposed by the colonial state, structures politics. This disunity is the fundamental cause of factionalism in Native communities, and it contributes significantly to the alienation that plagues them. What those who seek to understand and remedy the problems that flow from it often don't realize is that this separation was deliberate. (Alfred, 1)

This "embrace" of the state, made all the more comforting by the state's "support" of Native ceremonies and art forms, becomes a choke hold further squeezing the life out of Native existence.

Alfred reminds his readers that there exist several elders who are performing *the spectacle* of Native culture yet are often the deeply wounded victims

of residential schools and the brand of ethnic cleansing such establishments promoted. Such elders who have lead their community in traditional education and celebration "have been victims in a really bad way fro their whole lives. and end up sort of 'faking it'" (8).

Native culture has been devoured by the white Weetigo – the political and governance aspects of traditionalism have been seemingly destroyed forever. the folklore and art have been "spewed out" as harmless. meaningless waste. Torn from the actional aspects of itself. traditionalism becomes little more than a group of people going through the motions. Tradition. devoid of the power to act in the present. becomes a memory. It seems that Alfred is correct in asserting that this separation of tradition along cultural and political lines "was deliberate" for the ceremonies performed without power only serve to remind Natives of their difference and their defeat. This separation is a move so insidious it is almost admirable. No longer able to gain access to the youth through residential school. the state allows the children and grandchildren of those they normalized and de/reprogrammed to witness the death of their heritage. For the youth. such celebrations are nothing more than call-backs. reminders of a noble but dead greatness that can no longer serve them in modern society. For them tradition is just a show and they become quickly disillusioned. Without ever truly experiencing the power of Native existence. these youth stumble toward a complete absorption by mainstream society:

> [Y]oung people...disillusioned by the hypocrisy of older people. especially politicians. simply turn their backs on their communities and drift toward mainstream society. where racism still prevents their participation as full human beings....Young people...who are bored with traditional life and tired of traditional obligations. move to the city and form a class cut off from the benefits of both

societies. Not finding meaning or relevance in traditional obligations, they are forming a new culture with values and morals suited to their existence as alienated people: because they do not have a stake in preserving either society, destruction and self-destruction follow. (129)

Having mortally wounded Native existence through residential schools, the state now delivers the *coup de grace* through the disillusion and non-identity of today's youth.

At the very least, these disillusioned youth have recognized the "mythic peace" which Vizenor claims exists between Native societies and the state:

Mythic peace is not a balance, but the cause of manifest manners and dominance. The notion of a counterbalance is a theistic covenant in the structural themes of savagism and civilization.... That peace ended our war, ended our chance, and that peace comes back to us now in plastic beads and bones. (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 129)

The "war" between white settler culture and North American indigenous people is over to the extent that mass genocide is no longer practiced on the remaining Native population. Having won the war and established its government, the settler culture now seeks to garner the reputation as a wise, humble, and deserving winner by allowing their defeated subjects to once again practice their culture – the proviso being that these Native societies must still adhere to the imposed laws and beliefs of the state. The resulting ceremonies become symbols without substance:

Symbols are crucially important, but they must not be confused with substance: when terminology, costume, and protocol are all that change, while unjust power relationships and colonized attitudes remain untouched, such 'reform' becomes nothing more than a politically correct smokescreen obscuring the fact that no real progress is being made towards realizing traditionalist goals.... In too many Native communities, adherence to tradition is a shallow façade for power and success as defined by mainstream society. (Alfred, 27)

"The limitation of sovereignty is not sovereignty" (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 29), writes Gerald Vizenor in *Fugitive Poses* and a limited Native culture is *not* Native

culture. Ceremonies practiced for their own sake are not empowering. Only when they are given life through their conjunction with political actions can these ceremonies be considered more than a reminiscing of the past. The celebration of Native culture must be more than a brief respite from the oppression of the state. Unfortunately, many Native subjects who produce or observe many of these weakened ceremonies leave them only to return to the imposed state structures, many with false notions of what these ceremonies are supposed to represent.

Alfred writes that his people

> must recognize that we can never achieve the goal of peaceful coexistence as long as we accept the classical notion of sovereignty as the framework for discussions of political notions between indigenous people and the state. (Alfred, 53)

Subservience is not peace. The current existence of Native peoples as a society permitted limited and powerless celebration of its culture is not freedom. This limited culture leads to disillusion and misunderstanding within Native societies. Angry and frustrated with the mythic peace which Vizenor claims "ended our war, ended our chances," many Native people seeking a better existence turn to another (limited) aspect of this diluted version of Native culture – the warrior.

Laurence M. Hauptman discusses the notion of the warrior in his book *Tribes and Tribulations*:

> In the past decade, popular writers have increasingly concentrated their investigative energies on Native Americans, their contemporary issues and overall concerns; nevertheless, these books almost exclusively focus on the rise of Red Power militancy, the "warriors movement," and other forms of Indian activism, giving the public further misconceptions about the overall nature of Native American existence.... Although the history of Native American militancy is an important subject, each of these authors portrays Native America in a most limited way, dramatizing the armed confrontational aspects of Indian-white and Indian-Indian relations. To [such] authors...the heroic figures of Indian country are those Native Americans who risk their lives in challenging the white man or tribal governments imposed by the white man. The readers of such books get the impression that the

only "true Indians" are those in mortal combat at Wounded Knee (1973) or at Oka (1990). (109)

According to Alfred there are certain common caricatures that exist throughout indigenous Nations as they react to the state's efforts at co-optation. This "Mystic Warrior" (Alfred, 77) is at one end of the extreme while the "Hang Around the Fort" represents the other. The contemporary "Hang Around the Fort"

> is the person who is completely dependent on the established order for his political survival, and whose contribution consists mainly in scrounging for government handouts like the Hang Around the Forts who conspired in the suppression of their own people. (77)

These are the Native subjects who are faking their own culture, conducting ceremonies which do nothing to strengthen the Native community. The (non)action of such subjects, puppets of the white establishment, has given birth to the "Mystic Warrior"

> who thinks everyday in a good day to die. For this type of person, Indianness consists in conflict, and the only way to exist as an Indian is to withdraw into the mythic spiritual past and attack any semblance of modernity as betrayal. (77)

In the face of an oppressor who co-opts them and has spent the last five hundred years trying to eradicate their culture, many Natives discover they can be "united by their resistance"(Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 57). In a (misplaced) nationalistic fervor, these "Mystic Warriors" and "true Indians" initiate stand-offs, blockades, and seizures as action against their oppressor. According to Foucault, these warriors are a natural backlash to the prison-like oppression which creates groups of subjected individuals with like frustrations and desires:

> The prison makes possible, even encourages, the organization of a milieu of delinquents, loyal to one another, hierarchized, ready to aid and abet any future criminal act.... [W]here there is a prison there is an association.... And it is in these clubs that the education of the young first offender takes place: "the first desire that

is born within him will be to learn from his cleverer seniors how to expose [and counteract] the rigors of the law..." (Foucault, 228)

It is difficult, one might say impossible, to not take a physically violent stance against a system which has blocked off all peaceful and political routes to equality. It is doubly difficult to resist violence considering the cult of nostalgic nobility Alfred and Hauptman claim has been erected around the warrior figure:

> The attraction of this uncompromising persona is very powerful for people frustrated (as they inevitably are) by the effort to maintain a principled position in relation with non-indigenous governments – until the reality sets in that simply causing hell and discontent for the white man cannot be a life purpose. (Alfred, 77)

Stand-offs and blockades cause only minor and temporary disruptions. The power of the Repressive State Apparatus is such that these disruptions are quickly quelled and with little or no long-term benefits from the uprising reaching the Native community. Moreover, such violent outbursts only serve to legitimize the prejudices of non-Indigenous observers still swayed by the image of the "wild and unruly" Indian – the bad guy of the wild west. The co-opted Native who participates in the sham of empty ceremonies while pandering to Western political systems has two things in common with this "Mystic Warrior" who latches unto the romanticized notion of the unrelenting brave on the warpath – both are appropriating mere elements of their culture and neither are attaining their potential.

Such limited existence brought on by the imposition of a foreign power is not considered ethical by either Alfred or Agamben. According to Alfred, the very existence of a Western style government in North America is deplorable:

> There is no moral justification for state sovereignty. The truth is that Canada and the United States were established because indigenous peoples were overwhelmed by imported European diseases and were unable to prevent the massive immigration of European populations. (59)

The immorality of the state is further proven by Agamben in *The Coming Community* when he attacks the state's tendency to limit the existence of its subjects:

> [T]here is no essence, no historical or spiritual vocation, no biological destiny that humans must enact or realize.... There is in effect something that humans are and have to be, but this something is not an essence nor properly a thing: *It is the simple fact of one's own existence as possibility or potentiality*.... [T]he only ethical experience...is the experience of being (one's own) potentiality, of being (one's own) possibility. (Agamben, 42-3)

What does it mean to be one's own potentiality and possibility? The answer lies in an investigation of *desire* – the desire that is repressed by the subject, a desire to *be*.

Agamben's "whatever being" is the singularity (not the subject!) being its potential. He begins *The Coming Community* with a definition of this singularity:

> The coming being is whatever being. In the Scholastic enumeration of transcendentals (*quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonum, seu perfectum* – whatever entity is one, true, good, or perfect), the term that, remaining unthought in each, conditions the meaning of all others is the adjective *quodlibet*. The common translation of this term as "whatever" in the sense of "it does not matter which, indifferently" is certainly correct, but in its form the Latin says exactly the opposite: *Quodlibet ens* is not "being, it does not matter which," but rather, "being such that it always matters." The Latin always already contains, that is, a reference to the will (libet). Whatever being has an original relation to desire. (1)

The whatever singularity – the nonsubject – desires "its own taking place" (2): to transcend the being in language imposed upon it by the state which can only recognize the subject as a member of a set, like "Indian":

> For the state...what is important is never the singularity as such, but only its inclusion on some identity, whatever identity (but the possibility of *whatever* itself being taken up without an identity is a threat the State cannot come to terms with). (80)

Like Vizenor claims " the greatest danger the Indians could pose...arose from their absence rather than their presence" (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 2) so the burgeoning colonial state created a presence out of this absence – a presence which

is itself the absence of the real: "The Indian was an occidental invention that became a knowable simulation, the word has no referent in tribal languages or cultures" (11). The whatever singularity does not permit the definition conferred upon it by the state to limit its existence but rather engenders itself through its own being. Such an existence

> is not, in terms of the discussion that dominates Western ontology, either an essence or an existence, but a *manner of rising forth*: not a being that is *in* this or that mode, but a being that is *its* mode of being.... The being that does not remain below itself, that does not *presuppose* itself as a hidden essence that chance or destiny would then condemn to a torment of qualifications, but rather *expresses* itself in its qualifications, *is* its *thus* without remainder – such a being is neither accidental or necessary, but is, so to speak, *continually engendered from its own manner*. (Agamben, 28)

The whatever singularity is not limited by the presuppositions and qualifications of the state, it does not remain trapped "below itself," beneath state imposed names. "[T]he name, insofar as it names a thing, is nothing but the thing insofar as it is named by the name" (77) and to remain subjected by this name, this literary being, is the greatest evil according to Agamben. For to live within the limits of the name is to deny one's potentiality, one's very existence:

> The only evil consists...in the decision to remain in a deficit of existence, to appreciate the power to-not-be as a substance and a foundation beyond existence, or rather (and this is the destiny of morality), to regard potentiality itself, which is the most proper mode of human existence, as a fault that must always be repressed. (44)

Ideological State Apparatuses, therefore, are institutions of evil, for they categorize, normalize, and absorb all for the sake of creating subjects reliant on the state for identity and forever repressing their desire to be something other than a subject. As Butler writes, the subject must see its desire as destructive to itself, for a desire to be something other than its state appointed existence is a desire for non-identity:

> A vexation of desire, one that proves crucial to subjection, implies that for the subject to persist, the subject must thwart its own desire. And for desire to triumph, the subject must be threatened with dissolution. A subject turned against itself (its desire) appears, on this model, to be a condition of the persistence of the subject. (Butler, 9)

The curbing of desire, "the doubling back of desire" (22), fosters a new "order" (22) of desire. The subject, having accepted the fact that it is irreparably subjected, regards any relation of its desire to *be* as the unraveling of its social self. Attached to the notion of existence, the subject desires its own subjection as a confirmation of its existence.

In essence, this is the greatest trick the state has played on the subject. Convincing the subject that any action taken for the sake of desire – a desire for something other than subjection – will destroy the subject, the state has (seemingly) thwarted its greatest enemy – simple human desire. For desire to exist outside the state defined criteria is a great threat to the state as Franz Fanon explains in *Black Skins, White Masks*:

> As soon as I *desire* I am asking to be considered. I am not merely here-and-now, sealed in thingness. I am for somewhere else and for something else. I demand that notice be taken of my *negating activity* insofar as I pursue something other than life: insofar as I do battle for the creation of a human world – that is the world of reciprocal recognitions.
> I should constantly remind myself that the real *leap* consists in introducing invention into existence.
> In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself.
> And it is going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate my cycle of freedom. (218, 229, 231)

Desire is the "negating activity" of "endlessly creating [one]self" – "not being that is *in* this or that mode, but a being that is *its* mode of being." Such a singularity defies state conferred names and cannot be framed within a definition ("Indian"). This Fanonian leap into a world of supposed nonexistence is the pivotal moment when

the subject moves from inactivity to activity, from nonbeing to being, from having potential to being potential. Such a move constitutes a risky but defining moment for the subject:

> For everyone a moment comes when she or he must utter this "I can," which does not refer to any certainty or specific capacity but is, nevertheless, absolutely demanding. Beyond all faculties, this "I can" does not mean anything – yet it marks what is, for each of us, perhaps the hardest and bitterest experience possible: the experience of potentiality. (Agamben, *Potentialities*, 128)

This moment of potentiality is at once "the hardest and bitterest experience possible" and the most wonderful and liberating experience. The desire for potential is in direct opposition with the desire to survive within the state – the latter being the "pervasively exploitable desire" (Butler, 7) used by the state to keep the subject subjected. – "I would rather exist in subordination than not exist" (7). The Fanonian leap is fraught with risks, for through "Introducing invention into existence" the new self-creating subject/singularity is courting its own death "in order to expose and open to transformation the hold of social power in the conditions of life's persistence" (28). The subject *does* have a choice between Butler's non-active, submissive "existence" and Agamben's whatever being, but there is the threat of death, an annihilation of the subject through the rejection of the power that has created it.

In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Tomson Highway alludes to the perils of this leap. The departure of Gabriel to Toronto awakens in Jeremiah the notion that he is alone. Stranded in Winnipeg, Jeremiah finally comes to the realization that his efforts to become white, to become (as Francis puts it) "the white man's Indian" are in vain. Unable to claim a place in the white or Native spheres, this victim of

residential school and co-optation enters into a period of purgatory. In a Winnipeg bar, Jeremiah takes his first tentative steps toward accepting his heritage:

> ...across the room, drunken Indians as far as the eye could see.
> He had tried. Tries to change the meaning of his past, the roots of his hair, the colour of his skin, but he was one of them. (Highway, 215)

Of course, Highway is not insinuating that Jeremiah embrace the character of the "drunken Indian," rather in the following chapter, Highway has Jeremiah working in the streets helping such people. Jeremiah's years as a social worker for the "Winnipeg Indian Friendship Centre" (221) are depicted as a limbo time in the young man's life. Having effectively *died* as a colonized Indian, Jeremiah is still awaiting his rebirth as a Native being.

This leap also risks the existence of communities, not just individuals like Jeremiah. This theoretical "death" of which Butler writes is reflected in the indigenous loss of rights in instances where Native people try to critique the state:

> Communities that lack the basic capacity for self-sufficiency cannot make a strong assertion of nationhood. With this in mind, the state prevents the development of an economic base for Native communities and encourages dependency on the state. With near-complete personal and communal dependency on funds transferred from the state, Native communities are subject to perpetual coercion, and can challenge state power only at the risk of extreme economic and social deprivation. (Alfred, 75)

Five hundred years of oppression have assured the Native peoples' "near complete personal and communal dependency" on the state. To critique the state is to critique one's very existence – to risk death by risking the loss of social and economic qualifications which make up the existence of the subject within the state s/he is critiquing.

Though it is now obvious that the term Indian and all the limited right and extensive sanctions that go with it is false – a creation of the Western world, to

which no Native is obliged to conform – the idea of moving out from under this identity into a void of nonidentity is not exactly a comforting one for the subject. Dependent on the state for identity and social existence, the subject is uncertain of how to go about *being* in a world outside the state's structures. For Alfred, the Native being's attainment of his/her potentiality does most certainly involve the rejection of "identities and power relations that characterized us as a dominated people" (6) but such action does not constitute a leap into social nothingness. For Alfred, Native traditionalism is a way of existence outside the state and the moment his people begin to see traditionalism as a living, viable, and truly *the only* way of existing, they begin their lives as whatever singularities – Native *beings* realizing their potential:

> We have not fully recovered from colonialism because our leadership has been compromised, and we will remain subject to the intellectual, political, and economic dominance of Western society until the leaders of our communities realize the power of indigenous philosophies and act to restore respect for traditional wisdom (23)

In the eyes of the co-opted Native subject, tradition has been relegated to the past, making subjected existence seem the only alternative. Traditionalism has become an artifact. Moreover it has become synonymous with defeat – it did not save the Native subject from subjection and cannot be relied on now to offer any form of agency outside subjection. Jeannette C. Armstrong writes that "although severe and sometimes irreparable damage has been wrought, healing can take place through cultural affirmation" (Armstrong, 241). The shame instilled by residential schools and other Western institutions must be replaced by pride – the lie must be replaced by the truth:

> The dispelling of lies and the telling of what really happened until *everyone*, including our own people understands that this condition did not happen through choice or some cultural deficit on our part, is important. Equally important is the affirmation of the beauty of our people whose fundamental co-operative values resonated pacifism and predisposed our cultures as vulnerable to the reprehensible value systems which promote domination and aggression. (241)

It is impossible to gauge the extent to which guilt has penetrated Native cultures. If Vizenor is correct and Natives "are long past the colonial invention of the *indian*" (Vizenor and A. Robert Lee, *Postindian Discussions*, 84) then guilt may no longer be an issue. Yet it cannot be denied that there is an identity crisis within the Native community. The institutions and apparatuses set up to instill guilt and normalize "Indians" managed to deny several generations from experiencing a Native tradition that not only exists in ceremonies and art but also in politics and actual existence. If the Native subject can somehow be made to look to his past and see not only defeat, but a beautiful way of being that must be revitalized then another way of being outside the state identities is possible.

Tradition for Alfred is something that comes before the state and also comes after it. Tradition is outside the state and ulterior to it. In essence, tradition is the alternative to Butler's being within the state, and in a Agambenien sense, tradition (a being outside of subjection) is the *only* way of being. Tradition is described by Alfred as "a different path…opposite of the one we are on now" (Alfred, xxi) – which leads to independent being:

> If we are to emerge from this crisis with our nations intact, we must turn away from the mainstream of North American society and begin to act as self-determining peoples. We cannot preserve our nations unless we take action to restore pride in our traditions, achieve economic self-sufficiency, develop independence of mind, and display courage in defense of our lands and rights. Only by committing ourselves to these goals can we hope to look into the future and see ourselves re-emerging as peoples ready to take our rightful place in the world. (xii)

The embracing of tradition is the "negating activity" presented by Fanon in which the subject goes beyond the framework of the state which subjects it and "initiates [its] own cycle of freedom" (Fanon, 231). Traditionalism is the Fanonian introduction of "invention into existence" (229) in that it symbolizes the subject's rejection of a conferred identity in favour of constructing and living one's own identity:

> Within Native communities themselves, people are seriously questioning the identities shaped by the colonial reality, in an effort to construct intellectual and political strategies that will both resonate within the community and present an effective challenge to the state's latest strategies to perpetuate its dominance. (Alfred, 65)

These new questioning subjects need a way of being outside the state if they are to continue deconstructing their subjective existence – the only existence they have ever known. Alfred believes traditionalism can give these new (non)subjects a real and valid existence outside state definitions:

> Traditionalism is the way you live your life. It means having a clean body and mind. Traditionalism isn't only ceremonies and art, but government as well. Many people don't realize the distinction between ceremonial traditionalism and government in a traditional way. Governing people according to the values and principles of tradition is what's really important. (25)

This new (or is it old?) political and active brand of traditionalism is the present being approached by both the past and the future. Interestingly, when Vizenor tells his readers to "get back to tribal thinking" (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 43) he does not call for a return to the old ways – rather he described the move toward traditionalism as "getting back to the present" (43). It is not a nostalgic view of tradition being promoted here – "nostalgia is the absence of the real, the presence of imagination" (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 25) – this notion of traditionalism is very much alive. Alfred uses a very interesting term when discussing indigenous self-

government: "pre-/de-colonialized" (Alfred, 24). This belief system, this way of being is both pre- and post-state structure. Alfred asks his people to regard traditionalism as pre- and post-colonial – a way of life that was nearly destroyed by European expansionism, but a way of life which can be revitalized to combat the subjection brought on by this expansionism:

> Freeing ourselves from co-optation comes down to acknowledging the unbalanced power relationship that we exist within (and not making excuses for its continuation); and holding ourselves apart from the institutions and people that actually constitute colonialism. Colonialism is not an abstract notion, but a set of real people and relationships and structures that can be resisted and combated by placing our respect and trust where it belongs: in indigenous people, relationships, and structures. (79)

The colonial repression of indigenous people has relied on the creation of the term "Indian" and the establishment of institutions to deal with, normalize, absorb, and know this *simulation*. "White Americans," Francis writes, "incapable of comparing Native culture to their own, could only compare the culture of the Imaginary Indian to their own" (Francis, 194). Having created the presence of an absence, White society created a mass identity in its Imaginary Indian – what was true of one was true of them all. It is the defining aspect of traditionalism which drastically contradicts the state's tendency to create sets and poses the greatest threat to the mythology of the state:

> A crucial feature of the indigenous concept of governance is its respect for individual autonomy. This respect precludes the notion of 'sovereignty' – the idea that there can be a permanent transference of power or authority from the individual to an abstraction of the collective called government. The indigenous tradition sees government as a collective power of the individual members of the nation; there is no separation between society and the state…
> In the indigenous tradition, the idea of self-determination truly starts with the self; political identity – with its inherent freedoms, powers, and responsibilities – is not surrendered to any external entity. Individuals alone determine their interests and destinies. There is no coercion; only the compelling force of conscience based on

those inherited and collectively refined principles that structure the society. (Alfred. 25)

In this light traditionalism is finally recognized as a danger to the state. Traditionalism is not just powwows, dances, potlatches, and other ceremonies practiced as a sort of vacation from the repression of society. Traditionalism is the complete rejection of the state and its policies. This notion of individual autonomy eradicates the example of the "Indian" which was created to stand for every indigenous person and band. Traditionalism presents the state with the one thing it cannot handle – a community whose only commonality is its (in)difference to the example:

> The novelty of the coming politics is that it will no longer be a struggle for the conquest or control of the State, but will be a struggle between the State and the non-State (humanity), an insurmountable disjunction between whatever singularity and State organization. (Agamben. 85)

Unprepared and unable to deal with the countless singularities once neatly organized under a single term "Indian," the state falls into a condition of fear and confusion. Once again, the Native threatens with his absence – his unknowability:

> White society can define, even absorb and tolerate a second Wounded Knee, AIM, and Indian violence. Such conduct is definitionally Indian. What cannot be understood is what the modern Indian is struggling to do. Indians are behaving in a way that the white inventor of the Indian did not imagine; therefore such conduct is intolerable. (Hauptman. 109-10)

Colonialism and its continued perpetuation left the co-opted Native subject with two choices – the savage Indian of the past, or the co-opted (non)Indian of the present. Both represented the death of Native culture. Military violence was regarded by white society as the call-back to the old ways of the Indian warrior – a non-alignment easily remedied by the threat of the Repressive State Apparatus. The co-opted Indian lobbied for equality within the state structures, through

organizations founded and sanctioned by the state. Such Indians were truly no longer Natives but political stooges. Both types fell under the category of "Indian" and were therefore knowable to the state and easily controlled. This new Native being exists outside the "final vocabulary of dominance" (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 24) and, as Vizenor writes in *Fugitive Poses*, presents the state with only one solution:

> The vocabulary is "final" in the sense that if doubt is cast on the worth of these words, their user has no noncircular argumentative recourse, the words we use to formulate praise of our friends and contempt for our enemies...are as far as [the state] can go with language: beyond them there is only helpless passivity or a resort to force. (24)

"[H]elpless passivity" has never been a choice of the state which perpetually asserts itself through the subjugation of its subjects – rather, force will be used as a final resort in dealing with these whatever singularities. Giorgio Agamben discusses this state violence in *The Coming Community* in a chapter entitled "Tiananmen":

> What is most striking about the demonstrations of the Chinese May was the relative absence of determinate contents in the demands (democracy and freedom are notions too generic and broadly defined to constitute the real object of a conflict...). What the State cannot tolerate in any way...is that the singularities form a community without affirming an identity...
> Whenever these singularities peacefully demonstrate their being in common there will be a Tianamnen, and, sooner or later, the tanks will appear. (Agamben, 85, 86, 87)

As Alfred attests, the state "cannot admit the entrance of localized knowledge or different forms of power without undermining...the very existence of the state" (Alfred, 138). This being in common based not on "Indianness" but on a common rejection of this term is intolerable for the state. Unable to handle the demands of so many singularities the state falls back on its repressive apparatuses, dispelling peaceful demonstrators, jailing vocal traditionalists and patrolling reserves. Though

many Native beings are on the brink of existing as potential – the might of the Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses still manage to prevent change. Traditional natives are well on the way to freedom, but direct and blatant rejection of the state will only bring war – today's Native being must find a more covert way of attaining her/his potential.

Highway's treatment of the "Weesageechak meets (and eats!) the Weetigo" story relies heavily on allusions to modern society as a Weetigo. Throughout *Kiss of the Fur Queen* Highway recreates the Catholic Church and its residential schools as Weetigos, devouring the souls of Cree children and spewing them out as empty husks – human waste without a home in either the Native or non-Native communities. In retelling the "Weesageechak-Weetigo" story, however, Highway turns the shopping mall, the solidification of consumer culture into a Weetigo. The allusion is obvious when Jeremiah and Gabriel arrive at the food court:

> Which is when they came across the belly of the beast – one hundred restaurants in a monstrous, seething clump. Never before had Gabriel seen so much food. Or so many people shoveling food in and chewing and swallowing and burping and shoving and chewing and swallowing and burping, as at some apocalyptic communion. The world was one great gaping mouth.... The roar of mastication drowned out all other sound, so potent that, before the clock struck two, the brothers were gnawing away with the mob. (Highway, 119-120)

As the boys leave, the mall is once again depicted as a Weetigo – this time disgustingly bloated, uncaringly disposing of the souls on which it has fed: "Grey and soulless, the mall loomed behind them, the rear end of a beast that, having gorged itself, expels its detritus" (121). Other references to modern pop culture are made in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* including the warning of an elder in Jeremiah's home community "[t]hat television was the Weetigo finally arrived to devour, digest, and shit out the soul of Eemanapiteepitat" (187). One gets a sense in reading

Kiss of the Fur Queen that the white Weetigo is ever encroaching, that Native people are always already in the belly of the beast. Jeannette C. Armstrong concurs with this notion when she writes "severe and sometimes irreparable damage has been wrought" (Armstrong, 241) by Western establishments on Native people. This is the reality Native people must face – that no amount of pandering to the State or violent rejection of it will change the fact that Native life has been forever radically altered by the firm establishment of white culture and white values in North America. Native North Americans are literally up to their necks in the "shit" of white culture and it is not going away. In order to deal with it the traditional and proud Native should learn from the actions of Weesageechak.

According to Highway "Weesageechak comes down to earth disguised as a weasel" (Highway, 118), enters the Weetigo in a most unmentionable fashion, and proceeds to chew "the Weetigo's entrails to smithereens from the inside-out" (120). This is the destiny and reality of today's traditional Native – to wade through "the shit, lip, and ignorant attitudes" (Alfred, 73) of the white establishment, establish a firm place within the inner workings of the great Weetigo so that s/he may begin altering society and societal structures "from the inside-out." Like Althusser claims in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses": "the Ideological State Apparatuses may not only be the *stake*, but also the *site* of class struggle" (147) – the time has come for Native people to begin "conquering combat positions" (113) within the state. The apparent (and irreconcilable) ambiguity between traditionalism and life as a recognizable part of the state is a myth perpetuated by a state bent on the eradication of all Native values. The truth is traditionalism can modify and exist

within this new world without losing its basic tenets of equality, individual autonomy, and pro-activity.

In *Peace Power Righteousness*, Taiaiake Alfred writes of the dire necessity for Native people to acquire the skills which will give them the power in the modern, technological world they now find themselves:

> Our world has changed, and the skills we need are no longer the ones that allowed our ancestors to live free and happy in the bush. Instead we need the skills to operate in the information age. To live as we do in the post-industrial First World, we must be able to take wisdom from our own traditions and apply it to contemporary challenges in innovative ways, to develop self-reliance and autonomy. This means knowing our traditions of course, but also knowing as much as we can about the larger world in which we are living in today.... The world is becoming more complex, more specialized and more technological everyday. In this new environment the only real power is knowledge, the weapons our warriors need from the twenty-first century. To confront the state without an education today would be like going into battle against the cavalry with bow and arrows. (Alfred, 133)

Butler has preached of the perils involved in the acquisition of skills: "[t]o master a set of skills is not simply to accept a set of skills, but to reproduce them in and as one's own activity" (Butler, 119). Seeing only one route to agency, the subject permits the skill to become his/her defining action – in truth, the subject exists only so far as it fulfills this skill, s/he has become a mere cog in a greater machine. Tomson Highway touches on the notion of subjugation through the acquisition of skills in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Jeremiah Okimasis, through a diligence fosters through residential school has become a pianist. Highway, himself a classical pianist, is in no way insinuating that the acquisition of such a skill should be shunned by Native people everywhere, but rather demonstrates how skill, when accompanied with the ideologies taught at residential school can turn a student into a Butlerian subject -- defined and distanced by that skill.

In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Jeremiah's piano lessons become a diversion. Faced with the bold demonstration of an Ojibway Powwow in a downtown Winnipeg church, Jeremiah runs to his lesson for solace: "He mumbled some excuse and left. Chopin's mazurkas could wait no longer" (Highway, 176). His dependence on his role as pianist further distances him form his family and culture. Because he dare not damage his hands, Jeremiah can no longer take part in the daily life of Eemanapiteepitat:

> Up to Gabriel on the dock flew the crate of gutted fish. Abraham [the boys' father] heaving then bending for the next. A dozen more sat stacked in the fifteen-foot-long vessel, trout, pickerel, whitefish, no box less than sixty pounds. One by one, Gabriel piled the crates behind him.
> The hunter glanced at Jeremiah, who stood by idly, smoking a cigarette. "Not helping, son?"
> "He doesn't do heavy work, Dad." Gabriel's disdain unhidden, "it's bad for his hands." The air hung thick with the wet smell of fish, of entrails fresh and gleaming.
> "Bad for his hands?" frowned Abraham, and toiled on deep in thought. The signs had not escaped him: visit by visit, word by word, these sons were splintering from their subarctic roots, their Cree beginnings. (192-193)

In the instance of Jeremiah, Highway presents the all consumed subject defined by his name -- the function that has been appointed to him by those whose ideology he has been forced to consume. Reliant on his subjugation for identity, Jeremiah uses his acquired skill to not only find a place for himself in the white world, but to also chisel himself *out of* his "Cree beginnings."

Having embraced traditionalism, the notion of individual autonomy and existence before, after, and outside the state, the new Native being will not permit one aspect of his/her identity come to wholly define her/him. For this identity or skill is only a part of this new Native – one single aspect in his/her realization of being potential:

> Whatever singularity has no identity, it is not determinate with the respect to a concept, but neither is it simply indeterminate: rather it is determined only through its relation to an *idea*, that is, to the totality of its possibilities. (Agamben, 67)

Alfred firmly believes that each indigenous North American can become the "totality of [his/her] possibilities" and promotes a type of "selective re-adoption of traditional values" (Alfred, 81) he claims has benefited his people, the Kanien'kehaka:

> By abstracting core values and principles from the vast store of our traditional teachings, and selectively employing those aspects of their tradition that are appropriate to the present social, political, and economic realities, the community has begun to construct a framework for government that represents a viable alternative to colonialism, and that respects their tradition. (81)

Alfred has effectively pulled tradition out of the past and placed it in the present. He demands his fellow Native North Americans to acknowledge the ability of tradition and culture to change and adapt – to change and adapt while remaining a powerful existence outside state structures:

> The alternative to cultural annihilation begins with acknowledging the erosion of pre-contact and indigenous cultures and becoming fully aware not only of post-contact history, but also of the shifting, evolving nature of culture itself. (5)

Traditionalism is a celebration of the past and the present – moreover it is the celebration of past and present survival. Native people still exist despite all that has happened to them because the Native way of existing and thriving relies upon the ability to change without losing sight of constants like peace, freedom, and individual autonomy. Alfred praises this way of existing while explaining how Native leadership based on traditionalism will lead indigenous people into a prosperous future:

> Describing a Native style of leadership is…a matter of advocating an approach to politics combining innovation and flexibility with a core commitment to uphold the basic values of respect, tolerance, harmony, and autonomy. It is at the same time

rooted and adaptive, and it is inherently capable of promoting harmonious coexistence because it is set in a real context and not bound to an abstract or obsolete power structure. It is strong and confident, because it does not compromise the basic values and principles of indigenous philosophies. (140)

Traditionalist Native existence "is at the same time *rooted and adaptive*" – it is an existence which can at once adjust and evolve yet remain true to its basic tenets. Such an existence goes directly against the intent of the white officials who permitted Indigenous ceremonies but not Indigenous politics in the hope of permanently reducing Native culture and tradition to the inactive past.

Vizenor, in *Manifest Manners*, quotes from Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* when demonstrating how being both rooted and adaptive has saved Native society. The characters in such novels, Vizenor claims, "survived because they adapted themselves to the dual world that surrounded them" (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 85) and never gave in to the domination of white priests and government officials, which Silko terms the "witchery people" (85):

"I have made changes to the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the ceremonies strong," said the crossblood healer Belanie in *Ceremony*. "They are things the witchery people want. Witchery works to scare people, to make them fear growth. But it has always been necessary, and more than ever now, it is. Otherwise we won't make it. We won't survive. That's what the witchery is counting on: that we will cling to the ceremonies the way they were, and then their power will triumph, and the people will be no more." (85-86)

The new Native being is not one who rejects totally all things white and Western. As Alfred writes, a full-fledged return to the bush is impossible. For Alfred, a cultural revival is *not* a complete turn away from modernism. His notion of "selective re-adoption" extends to aspects of Western culture as well:

...cultural revival is not a matter of rejecting all Western influences, but of separating the good from the bad and of fashioning a coherent set of ideas out of the traditional culture to guide whatever forms of political and social development –

including the good elements of Western forms – are appropriate to the contemporary reality. (Alfred. 28)

This Native being. in a realization of his/her potential is a conglomerate. a link. a hinge. Steeped in both the virtues of traditionalism and the skills if the modern world. this Native constitutes a whole other way of being. In the instance of the co-opted residential school student. this Native being's greatest power stems from the fact that the state cannot truly *see* this singularity as anything other than a co-opted Native. As Francis writes. in the eyes of the state "Indians were defined in relation to the past and in contradistinction to white society. To the degree that the y changed they were perceived to become less Indian" (Francis. 59). The higher the position held by a Native in society is indicative of his/her level of co-optation – the subject becomes "more obedient as it becomes more useful. and conversely" (Foucault. 182).

In Laurence M. Hauptman's opinion. it is virtually impossible for white society to view a Native working within the system as not co-opted:

> It is hard for whites to imagine Indians who identify themselves with native culture and tribal values as energy entrepreneurs. as doctors. as lawyers. as business executives. as computer programmers. and as government officials on previously all-white school boards and city councils. (Hauptman. 110)

Alfred concurs with this statement. claiming that the state believes the only route to survival for Native peoples is their complete disavowal of their heritage and tradition in favour of complete absorption within Western society:

> the settler states are willing to accept the continuing physical existence of indigenous peoples – but only on the condition that they serve the corporate interests that dominate white society. In effect. indigenous people are respected by the state only to the degree that they adopt mainstream values. attitudes and behaviors. (Alfred. 118)

In the eyes of the state a Native working within the system has ceased to be Native. In Alfred's words such a person is regarded a "the Apple: the person whose thin red skin masks a mushy core of a shade closely resembling white" (77). Such a misrecognition could prove fatal for the state as thousands upon thousands of Natives equipped with modern skills and fortifies with traditionalism enter the Weetigo and commence "chew[ing] the Weetigo's entrails to smithereens from the inside out."

This notion of penetrating white society through the guise of the co-opted, defeated Indian is not new. Black Elk, one of the "performing Indians" in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, had a very subversive reason for joining that spectacle: "I though I ought to go because I might learn some secrets of the Weesichu [whites] that would help my people somehow" (Francis, 95). In Black Elk is the evidence of an early form of guerilla Indigenous intelligentsia. Natives remaining traditional yet assuming the guise of the humbled Indian to learn the "secret[s] of the Weesichu." Vizenor strongly believes such a deception has been pivotal in assuring the survival of his people:

> Natives have resisted empires, negotiated treaties, and, as diplomatic strategies, embraced the simulations of absence to secure the chance of decisive presence in national literature, history, and canonry. (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*, 23)

By posing as "Indians," a term which does not represent Natives but rather the *absence of Natives*, Native North Americans were able to survive. Vizenor believes that the subsequent generations of Native people who owe their very existence to this "fugitive pose" are postindian warriors whose greatest weapon is simulation:

> [T]he postindian warriors of simulation [are] a new tribal presence in the very ruins of the representations of invented Indians.... The warriors bear the simulations of their time and counter the manifest manners of domination. [Today's Native] is the

postindian warrior of simulations: the absence not the presence in the simulation. (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 3, 4, 18)

Bearing the "simulations of their time," the simulations of co-opted Indians, today's Native begins a methodical deconstruction of the state. Taiaiake Alfred is equally methodical when detailing the steps of this clandestine operation in his manifesto *Peace Power Righteousness*.

A Native person, schooled in the values of community and individual autonomy while at the same time educated in the skills which enable him/her to survive and thrive in the modern world, is ready to perform what Alfred terms "a traditionalist critique of the prevailing colonial structure and mindset" (Alfred, 7). Such a critique leads to "a certain rethinking of ourselves, rooted in tradition" (7). Alfred goes on to write, into powerful people who will open the eyes of a "mainstream society" which has been blinded by their own presuppositions about Native people and Native identities:

> Challenging mainstream society to question its own structure; its acquisitive individualistic value system, and the false premises of colonialism is essential if we are to move beyond the problems plaguing all our societies, Native and white, and rebuild relations between our peoples. (21)

In dealing with the white Weetigo, Native people must, according to Alfred, have a perspective somewhat similar to Captain Richard Pratt who wrote "It is only the Indian in them that ought to be killed." In a reverse of this statement, Native people must believe that as far as this Weetigo is concerned, it is only the *Weetigo* in it that ought to be killed. Alfred's proposed call to action in not an overthrow of the state but a merger of some of the state's positive aspects with the self-affirming, egalitarian concepts of tradition:

In traditional indigenous cultures, access to power is gained through balancing the divers aspects of our being, harmonization with the natural forces that exist outside us, respect for the integrity of others and the diverse forms of power, and knowledge or ritual.

The Kanien'kehake *Kaswentha* (Two-Row Wampum) principle embodies this notion of power in the context of relations between nations. Instead of subjugating one to the other, the Kanien' kehake who opened their territory to Dutch traders in the early seventeenth century negotiated an original and lasting peace based on coexistence of power in a context of respect for the autonomy and distinctive nature of each partner.

It is with indigenous notions of power such as these that contemporary Native nationalism seeks to replace the dividing, alienating, and exploitive notions, based on fear, that drive politics inside and outside Native communities today. This goal differs significantly from the revolutionary objectives of earlier phases of the Native movement. Not only is revolution in the classic sense unworkable, given the relatively small numbers of indigenous people in North America, but it is contrary to the basic principles of traditional indigenous philosophies. Indigenous peoples do not seek to destroy the state, but to make it more just and to improve their relations with the modern society. (52, 53)

Realization not revolution should be the "battle cry" of today's Native North American. There have been instances of peaceful coexistence prior to the "mythic peace" of state imposition as Alfred proves with the example of the Dutch and the Kanien'kehake. Unfortunately, the present state will not follow the example of Alfred's ancestors who "opened their territory" and their *minds*. Any altering of state politics will be seen by the state as the beginning of a great unraveling and will be resisted:

The State will not easily release its grip on control-power and accept the alternative of knowledge-power. The traditional values of indigenous peoples directly threaten the monopoly of control-power currently enjoyed by the State. Some scholars have interpreted the violence that occurs when the State confronts indigenous traditionalism as a natural Statist reaction to such threats. (64)

Thus today's Native becomes a guerrilla warrior bent not on toppling the state and subjecting those now in power but modifying the state and achieving equality and peace.

According to Althusser the state recognizes as "bad subjects" those who do not "work all right 'all by themselves,' i.e. by ideology" (Althusser, 181). The good subjects are

> Inserted into production governed by the rituals of the ISAs. They 'recognize' the existing state of affairs...that 'it really is true that is so and not otherwise,' and that they must be obedient to God, to their conscience, to their priest, to deGaulle, to the boss, to the engineer, that thou 'shalt love they neighbour as thyself,' etc. Their concrete, unclerical behavior is simply the inscription on life of the admirable words of prayer: "*Amen – so be it.*"" (181)

The bad subjects "on occasion provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (Repressive) State Apparatus" (181) but this is only because the actions of the bad subject are overtly and obviously bad – violent reaction or refusal. It is the bad subjects who receive the attention while the good subjects are left to "work by themselves" (181).

It is the responsibility of the bad subject to assume the mantle of the good subject and thus be misinterpellated and left to work on its own. If a threat goes unrecognized it goes unchecked and the bad subject is permitted to progress to as high a position as its talents will take it as long as it maintains the guise of a good subject – a cog in the machine working independently by itself to (re)perpetuate the state. In Althusser's essay the state is designed to push the subject as far as it will go until it "falls by the wayside and fills a post" suitable to its talents. Some of these subjects are pushed to the apex of state organization:

> A last portion reaches the summit, either to fall into intellectual semi-employment, or to provide, as well as the 'intellectuals of the collective labourer,' the agents of exploitation (capitalists, managers), the agents of repression (soldiers, policemen, politicians, administrators, etc.) and the professional ideologists (priests of all sorts...). (155)

Once the subject is deemed co-opted and subjugated, when s/he is seen by the state as a "good subject," s/he is permitted to excel to her/his maximum within identified parameters and roles. Thus the state continues to perpetuate itself by "using up" its subjects to the greatest extent.

Laurence M. Hauptman regards this tendency of the state to maximize its subjects as a space of agency for Native people. In a chapter from his text *Tribes and Tribulations* entitled "Warriors with Attaché Cases," Hauptman writes of Marguerite Smith, a Shinnecock from Long Island who uses her position as a high-powered lawyer to subversively serve her people. Smith was a tribal attorney who resigned from this position in a move that may appear to some as an instance of high-level co-optation:

> In 1989, she resigned from her post with Union Carbide to take a position, which she held until recently, as assistant attorney general of New York State.... In order to avoid any conflict of interest because of her new position, Smith resigned as tribal attorney allowing Roberta Hunter, another Shinnecock and a recent law school graduate, to take her place. Although it appears that Smith withdrew from tribal responsibilities, she and her family remain active in currently planning a new tribal museum as well as in other tribal concerns. By gaining valuable experience in both corporate and governmental law, Smith can provide this expertise to benefit the Native North Americans of Long Island.... [S]he is the perfect example [of] the Indian, invisible to non-Indians, who identifies with native cultures and tribal values while on occasions serving as a lawyer-government official. (Hauptman, 114-5)

Taken from a position of obvious Native activism, tribal attorney, and transplanted to a higher paying job seemingly "mainstream" and unconcerned with tribal issues, Smith appears to have followed the Althuserian route to "the summit" of subjective existence. But Smith is one of the many "new warriors" (111) Hauptman sees appearing all over North America, many of which see positions as officers if the law as the greatest form of agency: "Encouraged by elders and politically savvy tribal

leaders. [Native North American students] see law as the new weapon of individual and tribal survival." (113)

At any rate, education, be it in the field of law, medicine, computer technology, or construction is paramount in this undercover struggle. For Althusser, the school "teaches 'know-how'...in forms which ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology*" (Althusser, 133) so that

> children at school learn the 'rules' of good behavior, i.e. the attitude that should be observed in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for. (132)

This rationale presupposes that the subject is presented to the state as raw and unmolded – a canvas on which the state can construct whatever it wants. In the case of the residential school child represented by Jeremiah Okimasis, this presupposition was accurate because the children were separated from their families and culture at a very young and impressionable age. Today a young Native adult from a community which has rescued and reclaimed its traditions possesses enough self-awareness that s/he will not wait for the state to confer an identity upon him/her:

> ...leaders must promote Native education both in the conventional Western sense and in terms of re-rooting young people within their tradition cultures. In time, such education will produce a new generation of healthy and highly skilled leaders who will be able to interact with the changing mainstream society from a position of strength rooted in cultural confidence. These leaders will practice a new style of Native politics that will reject the colonial assumptions and mentalities that have allowed state domination to continue. It will recognize and counter the State's efforts to co-opt, divide, and conquer communities. It will be founded in the essential wisdom of tradition. It will blend respect for the ancestors' wisdom with a commitment to live up to their example. (Alfred 133)

Traditionalism, at least Alfred's interpretation of it, is primarily based upon self-sufficiency, self-awareness, and self-improvement. A community is only as strong as its members and Alfred believes that if the Native communities of North America

are going to improve and heal, each member must become an Agambenien singularity *living* his/her potential. This way of being is undetectable by the state which regards each student as a future subject within society. Progressing through the ranks of the state such a Native person is a guerrilla warrior in that s/he is capturing Althusserian "combat positions" (Althusser, 147) within the state from which these people will use some of the state's own power to decrease state control and further liberate his/her people.

Alfred firmly believes that

> Native people cannot withdraw from the larger world that surrounds them; in fact, it is essential to engage white society and challenge the state at every level and in every way. (Alfred, 78)

Native subjects are faced with an inevitability in which they must interact with the society which has subjected them in order to become un-subjected. "[A]n individual's actions within the system do matter." Alfred writes, and cites a Native elder when describing how best to ensure ones actions within the state benefit his/her people:

> You have to be a keen observer and watch there the power seems to reside among them – quietly make friends and you will be able to bounce your ideas from on to another and work your way into a position where you will have to be consulted about things.
> At your age, you and others should get on committees, be consultants, serve on boards, and set down a network of allies, Indian and white, that can understand the parts of your agenda that you want them to accomplish. (78, 79)

Alfred is calling for the construction of a Native underground which works within the system and against it – "[t]he formulation of a new indigenous intelligentsia" (135) properly educated to attain meaningful positions within the state yet rooted strongly in tradition so that these positions are not used to further perpetuate the state but to deconstruct it:

> The goals that flow from our traditions demand an approach based on undermining the intellectual and moral foundations of colonialism and exposing the internal contradictions of states and societies that promise justice and practice oppression. Non-indigenous people need to be brought to understand that their notion of power and its extension over indigenous people is wrong by any moral standard. This approach holds the greatest promise for the freedom of indigenous people. (144)

Again, the goal of these new-age, undercover warriors is not the destruction of the state, but rather a series of actions which will trigger the state's questioning of itself. "There is no hope," writes Alfred, "or sense, in attacking the state with physical force, or in seeking peace by unpeaceful means" (144). When the subject sets itself up as something other than and oppositional to the state, it begs for confrontation – for the state cannot tolerate a means of existence outside its knowledge. The goal is to enter the state and establish positions of power so that the desires of Native people begin to effect state legislation. It is truly amazing when reading Alfred's text to see a proposed means of action that will not only revive Native culture in the span of a few generations but will also promote traditionalism to the extent that it will begin transforming non-indigenous politics. The subjected leading the subjectors? It seems ironic. In fact, Gerald Vizenor believes irony plays a major role in the (re)establishment of Native cultures.

"The postindian is an ironist." (Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 68) Vizenor claims in *Manifest Manners* – a being who presents her/himself as something s/he is not. As Vizenor points out, this irony actually has its origins in white society's continued creation of "Indians" and their history:

> "The history of Native Americans only become useful when cultural resistance to Europe became important," wrote Michael Kammen in *Mystic Chords of Memory*. "Real Indians had largely disappeared by then from mainstream view; so their legends could be approvingly used for aesthetic and symbolic motifs...and to promote tourism. As *The Independent* remarked with open cynicism in 1903: 'Good Indian legends can be grown in almost any locality with a little care and attention.'

> During the 1890s ethnographers and anthropologists issued more frequent appeals that Indian myths and traditions be collected." Tribal ruins would become more significant in the nation, and each simulation of ancient histories was ironic, the undeniable absence of the tribes in the ruins of representation. (109)

The implied identities and traditions of Indians are ironic because they pretend to be something they are not – actual Native people and ways of life. Vizenor elaborates on this difference in *Fugitive Poses*:

> American *indians* are not the same as natives. The *indians* are that uncertain thing of discoveries, and the absence of natives, some*thing* otherwise in the simulations of the other culture. Natives are elusive creations, the *indigene*, the real sense of presence... (69)

To return to a quote from Francis' *The Imaginary Indian*: "White [North] Americans, incapable of comparing native cultures to their own, could only compare the culture of the Imaginary Indian to their own" (Francis, 194). The "Indian" for white settlers could never rise above that "uncertain thing of discoveries" so white culture created the Indian in order to allay fears and make Indians knowable. Creating a wild and unruly creature the state legitimized its establishment based on the pretense of civilizing this violent version of humanity. Yet the state could only manage to create a new simulation (the civilized non-Indian) out of the old one (the uncivilized old-time Indian)! Though these simulations were enforced for generations upon indigenous and non-indigenous cultures to the point that they became "real," the state never did learn what it meant to be a true Native, that "elusive creation." The resurrection of traditionalism and pride within Native communities along with the banishment of shame and co-optation now permits today's Native people to use this ironic Indian to their advantage.

This type of Native identity is a sort of ironic self-awareness in that it relies on what a Native *is* as well as what a Native *is not*. Throughout *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Highway provides his readers with peculiar instances of this ironic self-awareness. Gabriel, the youngest of the Okimasis family, brings a picture of his father with him wherever he goes. Abraham Okimasis, "Cree gentleman form Eemanapiteepitat, Manitoba, caribou hunter without equal" (Highway, 9) was also the "winner of the 1951 Millington Cup World Championship Dog Derby" (16). As a reward, in addition to the cup, Abraham was immortalized in a photograph depicting him being kissed by that year's Fur Queen, a "creature of unearthly beauty" (11) wrapped in "a floor length cape fashioned from the fur of an arctic fox" (9). The photograph comes to symbolize all that is beautiful and good about Cree culture for the boys while they are away from their family. More importantly, like Alfred's concept of traditionalism, the photograph is always alive, never frozen, the Fur Queen always placing a kiss on the caribou hunter's cheek. This photograph is the perpetrator of some of the most puzzling activity in Highway's novel.

As an abusive priest rouses the Okimasis brothers from their sleep, the Fur Queen winks – a seemingly bizarre action in such an insidious situation:

> The priest stood watching Jeremiah's receding figure. Then he turned back to Gabriel, who remained oblivious. Suddenly, his eye was caught by the photograph. In the semi-darkness, the moon, playing her usual tricks on glassy surfaces, made the Fur Queen wink. Nonplussed, the priest replaced the photo on the pillow and slinked down an aisle to the door. (74)

Later in the novel the now adult brothers convert a piano lesson into a bloody brawl – a brawl stemming from Gabriel's criticism of Jeremiah's (non)existence as a Native man denying his heritage. Once again the violent proceedings are watched over by the always active photograph:

Gabriel landed with the whole of his weight. He would gouge out his brother's eyes. Where was a knife, a screwdriver, a pencil? Fine, he would use his naked fingers. "And you," between pummels he spat, "how can you still listen to their sick propaganda? After what they did to us?"
With his last drop of rage, Jeremiah pulled Gabriel's neck to the breaking point...
"Noooooo!" Gabriel smashed his elbow into Jeremiah's face. "I am gonna break your arm. You will never, ever play that fucking piano."
Atop the Yamaha upright, the Fur Queen smiled. (208)

In the final scene of the novel, the Fur Queen actually leaves the confines of her frame and accompanies Gabriel's spirit following the young man's death from AIDS:

Rising from his body, Gabriel Okimasis and the Fur Queen floated off into the swirling mist, as the little white fox on the collar of the cape turned to Jeremiah. And winked. (306)

The Fur Queen winks during the most painful times in the Okimasis brothers' lives. These imposed identities, limitations, and oppressions may lead to abuse at the hands of those who perpetuate them. These simulations may become so deeply entrenched that they seem real enough to turn brother against brother in an internal war. Such tropes may even lead to the death of many Native people. Yet the winking eye in the midst of all this pain and propaganda proclaims that these simulations and the pain they cause *do not constitute the lives, heritage, or destinies of Native people*.

This wink is the ironic self-awareness which enables the Native subject to survive. This wink represents the reversal of disavowal – no longer does the Native subject disavow his heritage to exist in the state, now s/he disavows his/her imposed identity. The role s/he plays within the state does not define her/him but is one part of his/her potential. As Native people like lawyer Marguerite Smith ascend to higher

positions within the state they always turn to face their community and family. And wink.

Jeremiah's final disavowal of the imposed culture and his (re)turn to his Native heritage is very literal in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Faced with his brother's impending death, Jeremiah reassesses his life quite harshly: "My brother is dying and here I am playing dress-up in some fucking stupid sandbox" (302). Vowing to no longer play the part of the white man's Indian, Jeremiah still concedes to his mother's desire to have a Catholic priest administer Gabriel's last rites: "We'll get him a priest! We'll get him a priest!" (301).

Entering the hospital with his mother and the priest, Jeremiah appears very much to be the same subject he has always been, accepting the authority of European cultural power figures. Safely at Gabriel's bedside, Jeremiah waits for the priest and his mother to leave the room to begin his clandestine operation. To the pleasure of his dying brother, Jeremiah has smuggled a medicine woman into the hospital – the very Ann-Adele Ghostrider whose brazen pride in her Ojibway heritage so challenged and frightened Jeremiah in that downtown Winnipeg church:

> Below the Fur Queen portrait, Mariesis's rosary lay entwined in Gabriel's fingers. Ann-Adele Ghostrider's old, brown hand removed the beads and replaced them with an eagle feather.
>
> About to throw the rosary into the trash can, she hung it, instead on a Ken doll sporting cowboy hat and white-tasselled shirt. The medicine woman lit a braid of sweetgrass and washed the patient with its smoke. Her prayer now a low chant, she stood at the foot of the bed... (303)

The smoke from the sweetgrass triggers the hospital fire alarm which, true to the Althusserian form, alerts both the Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses of an unsanctioned activity being performed by "bad subjects." Sounding suspiciously

like a Nazi prison guard, the head nurse demands that Jeremiah "Open zat door!" (304). When her demand goes unanswered by the people at Gabriel's bedside, the fire chief, looking very repressive with his axe demands the disobedient subjects get in line. The power Jeremiah demonstrates in this scene is overwhelming:

> Monstrous in full kit, the fire chief came face to face with Amanda.
> "Madam," he stated, "you'll have to move."
> "No."
> Jeremiah's sweating face reappeared in the crack. The fire chief begged him. "Sir, unless the smoke detector inside that room is stopped, the whole hospital will have to be evacuated."
> "There's a man dying in here!" Jeremiah cried. "We're Indians! We have a right to conduct own religious ceremonies just like everyone else!" He slammed the door again.
> "Jeremiah!" Mariesis wailed behind the great wall of fireman. "Let this priest in or I'll kill you!"
> Jeremiah yanked the door, reached under the fire chief's armpit, shoved the midget priest away, pulled Mariesis inside, and slammed the door a third time. (304-305)

Quite literally, Jeremiah has penetrated deep into the Ideological State Apparatus under the guise of a conformed and co-opted Native subject. Solidifying himself in a position of authority, Jeremiah is able to proclaim himself without fear of oppression and manipulate the situation. The imposed Catholic religion, which has wielded so much power over Jeremiah throughout the novel, is in this instance pushed powerlessly aside as Jeremiah "shove[s] the midget priest away." What Highway has Jeremiah do in this scene is exactly what Alfred would have all Native subjects do on a wider scale: "In our relations with others, we need to engage society as a whole in an argument about justice that will bring about real changes in political practice" (Alfred, 145). Of course, in the Althusserian paradigm, such action would "provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (repressive) State apparatus" (Althusser, 181) *unless* such an argument is perpetuated by one solidly secure within the Ideological State Apparatus:

> Our youth must begin to acquire the knowledge and skills that are the true weapons of the information age. Bringing a final end to colonialism will demand the complete destruction of its intellectual and moral premises. In their place we must establish a set of justifications for indigenous self-government that will resonate with the best alternative traditions within the dominant society as well. This can happen only if we collectively develop the ability to argue the justice of our position in a universal logic and language.
>
> Eloquent speakers, profound thinkers, and creative leaders abounded in traditional indigenous societies. The recovery of these traditions and the re-establishment of respect for knowledge in all forms are what I mean in calling for the (re)development of an indigenous intelligentsia.... People who can shape ideas, translate, and create language will be essential to the process of decolonialization, once we have created an informed and critical polity by increasing the general level of education in our communities. (Alfred, 141, 142)

It is this "selective re-adoption" of both traditionalist Native ideologies and new world skills that Alfred believes will make the unsubjugated Native subject a pivotal part of the new ideological State Apparatus. The Althusserian state misinterpellates as readily as it interpellates and through the prolonged education of Native North American students it *assumed* were helplessly and irreparably co-opted, the state has planted the seeds for its own unraveling. Through an ironic self-awareness, the seemingly co-opted subjects can present themselves as obedient Althusserian "good subjects" and appear to "work all right 'all by themselves'" (Althusser, 181) even as they alter the inner structures of an imposed system. Strong and proud, these "postindian warriors" have overcome the oppression of the Ideological State Apparatuses and now use their knowledge of the inner workings of these Apparatuses to create a reality based on equality and peace.

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